VEL
ONE

FALL 1991 $4.00

LILITH

DEC 0 9 RECD
Property of
Graduate Theological Union

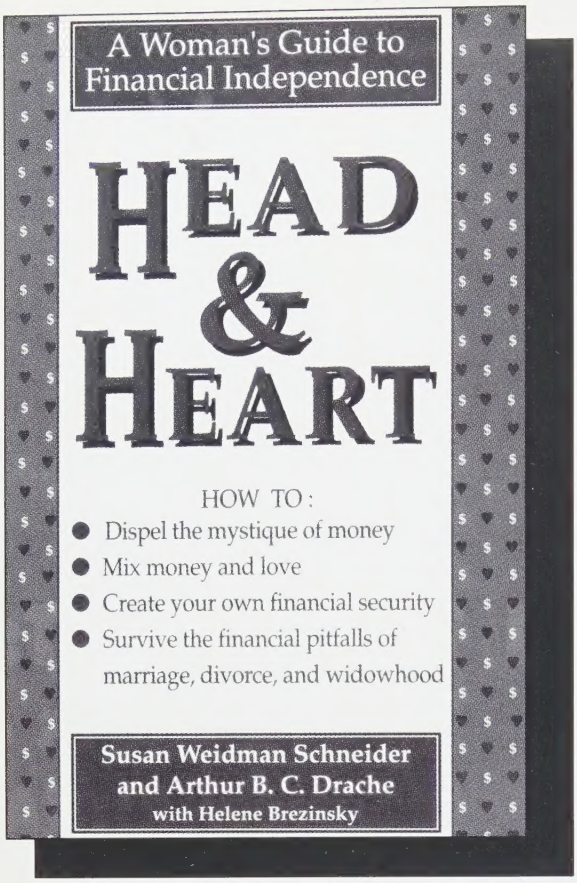
asidic
Vife Finds
elf After
ippie-Hubby
Valks

reat
tories
by
race
aley

IN THE SPIRIT:
12 PAGES OF NEW RITUALS FOR JEWISH WOMEN

Jewish/Asian Kids—
Finding a Community

13


A Woman's Guide to Financial Independence
HEAD & HEART
HOW TO:
Dispel the mystique of money
Mix money and love
Create your own financial security
Survive the financial pitfalls of marriage, divorce, and widowhood
Susan Weidman Schneider and Arthur B. C. Drache
with Helene Brezinsky

HEAD & HEART

A Woman's Guide to Financial Independence

by

Susan Weidman Schneider and Arthur B.C. Drache

with Helene Brezinsky

- Money is power. If you don't control your finances, you don't control your life.

- Do you think financial planning is boring and difficult? Do your family relationships or romantic entanglements have an adverse effect on your decisions about money? Do you know how to negotiate on the job?

- *Head & Heart* provides bedrock financial information laced with stories about real-life women dealing with the tangled emotional/financial concerns of their lives: surviving single and solvent, taxes, insurance, widowhood, philanthropy, eldercare and more.

Available through your local bookstore, or you may order through the Publisher:
send check, or charge on Visa or Mastercard to:
Trilogy Publishers • 155 South El Molino Ave. • Suite 103A • Pasadena • CA • 91101
phone:(818) 440-0669 • fax:(818) 795-0149
Please include $3.00 S/H for one book, $1.00 for each additional
TRILOGY BOOKS • 359 pp. • $14.95 • ISBN 0-9623879-0-8

LILITH

FALL 1991 VOL. 16, NO. 4

COVER STORY: CASTING MISS SAIGON'S BABY *by Hoong Yee Lee Krakauer*
Four-year-old Mikki Lee finds out she's not the only one with a Jewish daddy and a Chinese mom.. 5

FEATURES

CELEBRATE THE SPIRIT. . .

p. 6

• WOMEN'S FOLK JUDAISM *by Jane Litman*
Does Judaism seem to be of, for and by men? It wasn't always so. How to retrieve women's voices through *bubbeh meisehs*, archaeology, folklore and runic texts. Plus . . . beyond candlesticks: a roundup of unusual ritual objects we bet you never knew about. 6

• PREGNANT? DON'T EAT RADISHES *by Emily Taitz*
Some farfetched medieval Jewish childbirth practices--all scientifically proven 9

• IN SEARCH OF THE IDEAL SHUL *by Christie Balka*
Has your synagogue hammered out a statement of principles, or just a dues schedule? Here's a shul that has written feminism, diversity, politics and good works into its constitution....10

p. 14

• WHAT, THEN, IS SPIRITUALITY? *by Rachel Naomi Remen*
Finally a real definition of that elusive word....13

• "WHAT THE ARK IS TO THE JEWISH MALE, MY DISH CUPBOARD IS TO ME." *by Nancy Winternight*
A painter documents her domestic life--what's sacred, sad, simple 14

LUBAVITCH HUSBAND (former hippie) WALKS *by Miriam Weiss-Katz*
Sometimes it takes decades for a woman to wake up in her marriage....16

p. 16

A CONFERENCE FOR CHILDREN HIDDEN DURING THE HOLOCAUST *by Susan Schnur*
Belatedly, a generation of Holocaust survivors (mostly women) comes into its own. One by one, these women break out of their solitude, and feel entitled to call themselves "survivors." 20

GRACE PALEY'S LONG WALKS AND INTIMATE TALKS *new stories* 24

DEPARTMENTS

BODY AND SOUL: CORNSTALKS, CONCH SHELLS AND MY JEWISH PROBLEM *by Mary Gendler*
An ecofeminist's dilemma 32

THE WAYS WE WERE: WAS MAMA A VIRGIN? *by Betty and Phil Suchow*
Mama tells her own immigrant story, accent and all 36

KOL ISHAH—NEWS ABOUT WOMEN
Feminist dilemmas for mothers of boys; women rabbis on miscarriage; who speaks on the gag rule 3

LILITH REVIEWS 28

TSENA RENA Indispensable resources for where to retreat, refresh, restore, replenish 34

LILITH MARKETPLACE 37

cover photo: Heidi Shalloway

LILITH is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve who insisted on equality with Adam: *"After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, He created a woman, also from the earth, and called her 'Lilith.' Lilith said: 'We are equal because we both come from the earth.'"* (From *The Alphabet of Ben Sira, 23a-b*)

LILITH is published by Lilith Publications Inc., a non-profit organization. Subscriptions: $16/4 issues; institutions $24/4 issues. Single copies $5.00 prepaid. Outside the U.S. add $8/year. U.S. funds only.
Copyright © Lilith Publications, Inc., 1991. All rights reserved under international and Pan American Conventions.
Editorial Office: 250 W. 57th St., NY, NY 10107.

LILITH welcomes articles, fiction, poetry, memoirs, photos and original artwork. Please include one-sentence biographical data, address and phone. Mss. must be typed, double spaced. For guidelines, or return of ms., please enclose SASE, LILITH Publications, Inc., 250 W. 57th St., NY, NY 10107. *Associate member American Jewish Press Association. Indexed in* Index to Jewish Periodicals

FROM THE EDITOR

l-r: Rachel Dobkin, Rachel Kadish, Naomi Danis, Susan Schnur
seated: Susan Weidman Schneider

When the magazine went out to its first 1500 subscribers in 1976, LILITH's charter subscribers were garnered from subscription forms circulated at Jewish women's conferences, from announcements made in women's studies courses and from exchange ads in other periodicals. We'd have predicted that those first readers identified themselves as Jews, as feminists, and as people interested in innovations and creative change. We weren't far off the mark, judging from surveys of LILITH's readers in the magazine's first years of publication.

What did surprise us was that about 40% of LILITH's readers did nothing else Jewish when they first began to read the magazine. They didn't belong to a synagogue or other Jewish organization, didn't read any other Jewish periodical, and didn't support any Jewish charities. (The other 60% were involved with Jewish life, whether via mainstream institutions or alternative activities.) A woman who begins reading LILITH because she happened to pick up a copy on a college campus, or who was given a subscription by her Aunt Judy, may not affiliate with either Jewish or feminist causes when she first picks up the magazine, but she certainly sticks around for more. Our readers are among the most loyal of magazine buyers—two-thirds of you have been subscribers for three years or more. And like Aunt Judy, you give LILITH subscriptions as gifts for graduations, Bat Mitzvahs and special birthdays.

Now that the magazine is celebrating fifteen years of bringing its unique view of Jewish women's issues to an ever-widening audience of women and men, we've polled our readers again. More results will follow, but here's a preview: on average, you read 42 books a year. Like LILITH's editors, you are highly educated (about two-thirds have graduate degrees) and (if you ask me) underpaid!

LILITH's staff this past season was refreshed by several young women. The cast of characters (some of whom are shown here) included Rachel Kadish, en route to spend a year in Israel to write and volunteer for various Israeli women's causes; Lauren Golden (of Williams College), Kathy Sillman (from Brown), Juli Bergoffen (of William Smith) and Lainie Blum (a permanent staffer who's a graduate student at the Jewish Theological Seminary). Rachel Dobkin of Barnard guided those over 25 through the mysteries of our Big Mac, a desktop computer.

In a small office, jammed with great books, smart women, and giant piles of "recycled scrap paper," the addition of this computer system has been something of a mixed blessing (aside from the more obvious high-tech advantages and liabilities). For one thing, since we all work right through lunch (often through breakfast and dinner too) and eat at our desks, and everywhere else, we run the risk of having yogurt or tuna fish fall into the keyboards. For another, the introduction of the Mac has highlighted one of the joys of this office—it is a very non-competitive workplace.

In many ways, we all teach, and learn from, each other. The younger staffers, quick to master (mistress?) the new programs, teach us. And the editors invite into the process anyone who'll listen, sharing how editorial decisions are made, soliciting story ideas and design suggestions from everyone present. It feels quite non-hierarchical, with advice asked (and offered) on every subject—personal, political and grammatical. These days, when workplace harassment is the subject of every conversation, the environment at LILITH continues to feel democratic and supportive, friendly and feminist.

I haven't always appreciated how unusual our working relationships are. Which may be why I was astonished recently when one of our readers, arriving in NY from Minneapolis, said, "Meet you at the LILITH office? Great. It'll feel like a pilgrimage." Somewhere between this overblown image of a shrine-like workplace and Susan Schnur's estimate that the world headquarters of LILITH is extraordinary in its human buzz lies the chaotic reality.

This is the process that brings you the magazine four times a year! Keep your comments--and your subscriptions--coming.

Susan Weidman Schneider

Editor-in Chief
SUSAN WEIDMAN SCHNEIDER

Editor
SUSAN SCHNUR

Fiction Editor
JULIA WOLF MAZOW

Poetry Editor
ALICIA OSTRIKER

Assistant to the Editors
LAINIE BLUM-COGAN

Administrator
NAOMI DANIS

Production
RACHEL DOBKIN

Advertising
LESLIE MARGULIES

Art Director
BARBARA TAFF

Interns
JULI BERGOFFEN, LAUREN GOLDEN, RACHEL KADISH, KATHY SILLMAN

Founding Co-Editor
AVIVA CANTOR

Board of Directors
BARBARA B. DOBKIN, YVETTE GRALLA, DEBORAH FULLER HAHN, FRANCINE KLAGSBRUN, NATALIE PELAVIN, RACHEL JOSEFOWITZ SIEGEL

Contributing Editors
ARLENE AGUS, DIANA BLETTER, ESTHER BRONER, NINA CARDIN, ELAINE COHEN, SUE LEVI ELWELL, REENA SIGMAN FRIEDMAN, BLU GREENBERG, JUDITH HAUPTMAN, HARRIET GOLDHOR LERNER, SHARON LIEBERMAN, AUDREY FREIDMAN MARCUS, RELA GEFFEN MONSON, JUDITH PLASKOW, NESSA RAPAPORT, SANDY E. SASSO, MARY CAHN SCHWARTZ, AMY STONE

Our thanks for their generous support go to:

SUSTAINERS: Barbara Dobkin, The Koret Foundation, Lynn Kroll, The Lilly Endowment, Belda Lindenbaum

SPONSORS: Raquel Newman, Judith Stern Peck, Caroline Sheinbaum, Doreen & David Hermelin Philanthropic Fund

FRIENDS: Frances Brandt, Helen Kadish, Janet L. Kranzberg, Susan Laemmle, Myra Reisman, Nancy B. Rubinger, Ursula F. Sherman, Marcia C. Spiegel

DONORS: Beverly F. Blatt, Judy Bloom, Joan Bradus, Ellen S. Cannon, Diane S. Claerbout, Pearl Elias, Marcia Falk, Shirley Gould, Pearl Greenstein, Joan L. Gunzberg, Linda Hirschhorn, Alison Jordan, Heidi H. Katz, Yvonne Lalanne, Patricia Lane, Bonnie K. Lessing, Penina Maier, Margaret Marshall, Patricia Rubin, Edith Seiderman, Elaine Starkman, Toby Stein

MOTHERS OF BOYS—THE FEMINIST DILEMMA

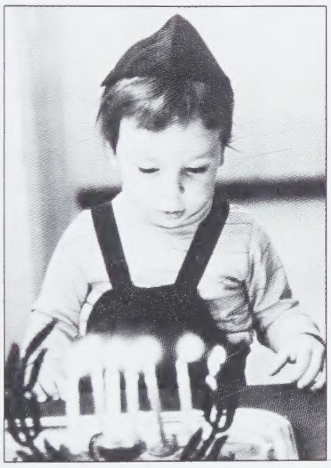
The Persian Gulf War spurred millions of new American mothers to ask, for the first time: "What will war mean to me as a mother, and what will it mean to my son?" It was this question that in Spring 1991 brought dozens of women to the "Mothers of Boys" support group sponsored by the Bay Area Jewish Family and Children's Services in San Francisco.

"Mothers of Boys" was created in the spring of 1990, and its timing couldn't have been better. Though there was a good amount of interest in the group from the outset, "interest really peaked around the Gulf War and the possibility of the draft," according to Alison Ehara-Brown, one of the staffers.

There are two sections of "Mothers of Boys" sponsored by JFCS's Parents' Place and Children's Institute, respectively. The group's founder, Joanna Levine, runs an introductory mini-session that meets twice for two hours each. Alison Ehara-Brown coordinates a more in-depth support group, meeting for six weeks.

Guns and war and violence are only some among the many issues that the participants discuss. Says Ehara-Brown, "A lot of these women have feminist backgrounds. They are struggling with being parents and having a working life. And they went into parenting with a strong sense of wanting to raise boys who would be different—non-sexist, sensitive, non-violent." Mothers come to "Mothers of Boys" to deal with the intense differences they face in the socialization of boys and girls. They come to share ideas about how to raise someone who is different from them and from what they know about growing up as girls.

Violence is perhaps one of the most common subjects the mothers want to discuss. One mother, says Ehara-Brown, had raised a "gentle child, disposed to loving and nurturing rather than fighting." Once the child went to elementary school, however, "he was hassled by the other boys." His mother has to struggle with her need to protect him and his need to assert his independence and figure out for himself what he needed to do to survive.



Yet many mothers, considering themselves liberal by any measure, come up against their own surprisingly ambivalent feelings when their sons like pink, want to wear dresses and play with dolls.

"For some mothers," says Ehara-Brown, "raising boys is an opportunity to reclaim those areas they were shut out of, growing up as girls. For some, there's a conflict between having to discipline a son and being somewhat intimidated by him because of his sex. For other women, raising boys means having to deal with all the things—football, camping—they hate. But always, raising boys can be an opportunity to expose young boys to a wide spectrum of life experiences."

Currently, there is a waiting list for the program. Ehara-Brown attributes the interest to "the tremendous amount of isolation and confusion that parents feel. There has been a change in the roles of mothers and fathers, where things aren't as clear-cut as they used to be. It opens a whole series of questions never asked before."

Levine concludes, "We don't pretend to have all the answers. But I think it's important for them to know it's alright to ask the questions."

—Lainie Blum

WOMEN RABBIS ON MISCARRIAGE

For over two thousand years, rabbis came in only one variety: male. As a result of this narrow representation, certain questions were never asked. For example, should there be a formal Jewish ritual response to miscarriage—for both a woman and her partner?

Recently, three women rabbis—Amy Eilberg, Debra Reed Blank and Stephanie Dickstein—have addressed this precise issue (of real importance to one in five of us). So far the Conservative movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards has endorsed Rabbi Blank's paper discussing the need for a communal response to women's miscarriages.

Blank's paper sets forth that—should a woman desire attention after a miscarriage—it is obligatory on the community to visit the couple, acknowledge their loss and help attend to their needs. Immediately after the miscarriage, while the woman is recuperating, her partner may wish to say or arrange for a "Mi She-berakh" (a prayer asking for healing) to be said at the synagogue on the woman's behalf. The rabbi and the community might announce the loss and visit the "holim" (this technical designation—"being a sick person"—includes the partner, who may suffer mental distress). After recovery, Blank continues, the woman might consider going to the mikveh to provide a sense of closure and she might say the "birkat ha-gomel"the prayer recited when one has survived physical danger.

Blank argued to the committee that Judaism's lack of a ritual response to miscarriage was a "glaring gap."

An earlier paper, by Rabbi Amy Eilberg, ran awry when it suggested a potential confusion of fetuses and people.

continued on page 33.

LETTERS

Jewish/Black

On your "Letters" page [Summer 1991] I found the headline of one piece of correspondence, which evidently parallels the article to which it referred, misleading and insensitive. The headline was "Black women and Jewish women." The most prominent mass of Jewish women featured in worldwide news stories not long ago were Black, Ethiopian Jewish women embarking on an exodus to Israel. Failure to acknowledge that "Black women" and "Jewish women" are not mutually exclusive phrases broadens the issue of polarization beyond Jews and non-Jewish black women to include Jews of varying ethnic backgrounds. Jews, like Christians, Muslims and members of other major religious groups, come in all shapes, sizes and **color**. Let us recognize the broad spectrum of Jewry when we say "Jew."

Suzanne L.Meyer
Washington, D.C.

How frustrating to read about the Black-Jewish Women's Coalition in Indianapolis but no mention of how to get a copy of their bibliography of fiction and non-fiction by Black and/or Jewish women.

Lois Ballen
Santa Fe NM

[*To order, please send $2 for postage and handling to: Debbie Matin Mallah, Dialogue Today, 536 W. 86 St., Indianapolis IN 46260*]

Creating Jewish Life in Isolation

Lilith magazine is an important way for me to hear what other Jewish women are doing—since I often feel isolated here in the South Coast of Oregon. The closest rabbi or temple is in Eugene, which is three hours away. I've learned a lot over the past 10 years I've been living here. Getting to understand Judaism has become important to me: Being a Jewish woman is very complicated. I took it all for granted when I lived in NYC, where I was raised. It is so different to actually *know* I am a minority. I never felt it in New York. People are constantly asking me questions about Judaism—I am the only Jewish teacher in a town of 4,500. I count on LILITH to enlighten me about my heritage and to help me feel proud of my Jewishness. I am also trying to raise my daughter Jewish, although she is the only Jewish child in grades K–4 in our town of Bandon. It is a struggle for us at times. She wants to have the Easter Bunny visit her, and Santa Claus, too. I would like to hear from other women struggling to raise their children—and themselves—Jewish in isolated communities. This would be helpful to me.

Joanne Drapkin
Bandon, Or.

Our Bodies, Revisited

There was so much I could relate to in your Spring 1991 issue. What a piece of work it is!

I had my uterectomy (hysterectomy deals with hysteria and this had nothing to do with that at all. I have no idea where my "hysteria" is physically, to have it removed.) Eight years ago I went through the same questions that are presented so well in "Nancy at 44", written so personally by Nancy Helman [Spring 1991]. Although it has been years since the actual surgery, I never had a real time to grieve nor a formal way to do so. I cried tears of recognition when I read what her feelings were. It's so nice to be validated.

Marcia S. Glatt
West Henrietta, N.Y.

Sheila Stanger's article "Instructions for the Birthing Team" [Winter 1990] subtly wove a certain sexism within a pro-Orthodox stance.

First, I object to the implication of the arti cle that non-Hasidic, non-Orthodox, or non-Jewish hospital personnel should be expected to routinely provide specific care to ultra-Orthodox couples in childbirth without being asked. I think they should be aware of this special situation, but it is the responsibility of the prospective parents to speak up, to find out what is available, and to assertively request what they need. I know a little of what it feels like to be different, to have unique needs because of belief. I gave birth in a quite conservative area of the Midwest on the fourth night of Hanukkah, which also happened to be Christmas. There were many comments made linking the birth and the baby to Christmas. We had to speak up many times. Some of the personnel had probably never met a Jew before, let alone heard of Hanukkah.

During the birth of my daughter, my husband was right there for me both emotionally and physically. It is hard for me to understand the practice of *niddah* [the practice of a man and woman staying apart at any show of menstrual or vaginal bleeding, e.g. at the onset of childbirth], especially at the time when a woman's life is in danger, as in childbirth. However, I do feel that ideally *niddah* can be practiced without degrading women if it is seen as a separation; something a woman chooses to do rather than something that is done to her. I can imagine women in ancient times choosing to be together, away from men.

For an Orthodox couple practicing *niddah* it many be possible for the husband to be there emotionally for his wife, but he cannot be physically supportive of her. In my opinion, therefore, he is not qualified to be her coach. A man practicing *niddah* cannot be a birthing coach. To have *anyone* attempting to be a childbirth coach without touching the woman who is giving birth, is one of the most sexist, anti-women ideas I have ever encountered.

The second-to-last paragraph was the most upsetting and offensive. Throughout, we are told of all the things the husband "can't" do for his wife as she risks her life to birth their child. We are informed that, among other things, he is "unable to give her a teaspoon of ice chips." Then, at the close of the article, we are presented with his special needs. On the Sabbath, his day of rest, as his wife labors in great pain, we are supposed to make sure all his physical needs are provided for because of the "restrictions placed on him." This was the last straw.

Patricia Moger
E. Greenbush, N.Y.

Women Shake the World

Having followed the progress of LILITH for some years now, I felt compelled to write a fan letter. The last few issues were outstanding, but the Summer 1991 issue is a winner. Coming from the Community Service ethic, where it is important, I believe, to turn advocacy into action, I was particularly delighted with Maria Stieglitz's "Five Women Who Shake the World."

All the women Stieglitz chose are unique and excellent role models, but Stefanie Held stands out because of her proactive stance in working with AIDS babies, without benefit of "formal credentials." So often people are turned away and tuned out because they don't have a variety of academic letters after their name. In today's social and economic climate, we need all the help we can get: common sense, enthusiasm, follow-through, and *chutzpah* can bring results.

Nancy B. Rubinger
New York, NY

CASTING MISS SAIGON'S BABY

by Hoong Yee Lee Krakauer

On Saturday, May 18, 1991, Johnson Liff Casting held an open casting call for the part of Tam, the illegitimate child born to the prostitute in the Broadway show "Miss Saigon." Because of the controversy raised over the casting of the principal roles, the ad very distinctly specified "Asian/American child between the ages of 4 and 5, no taller than 41 inches."

That morning, I boarded the 8:07 A.M. train to New York with Mikki Lee, my "Chewish" (half Chinese, half Jewish) 3 1/2 year old daughter and Mildred, my Jewish mother-in-law.

"*Lai, lai, lai*!" I called as Mikki Lee began meandering down the aisle of the train.

She ignored me and continued walking towards the conductor who was punching holes into tickets.

"Come here!" I repeated begrudgingly in English. Mikki Lee looked at me reproachfully and walked back to Mildred and me.

Although she understands Chinese, Mikki Lee is not eager to converse in any language other than English. Her reluctance has always frustrated and saddened me. Growing up in a Chinese-speaking home, my sister and I began learning English in kindergarten and grade school. It became, for us, a language of necessity. Chinese was our special means of expressing ourselves, our own private realm into which we could transport ourselves simply by shifting linguistic gears. It gave us another way to share our adolescent thoughts and dreams, and, more importantly, being bilingual provided us with another pair of cultural eyes through which we interpreted and eventually assimilated our world. A rare and precious gift I wanted so dearly to share with my daughter.

We arrived early. The rehearsal room was empty except for a sleepy receptionist sipping her morning coffee at an extremely cluttered desk and a few people setting up rows of folding chairs.

People began trickling in. Slowly, we were surrounded by a most unusual and exotic group of children. For the first time, Mikki Lee found herself among Amerasian children who looked eerily similar in their coloring and facial features.

Mikki Lee Krakauer

She grabbed my hand and pointed excitedly at a beautiful little girl with a delicately shaped face and dark eyes shaped like watermelon seeds. Her straight, light brown hair, which was cut exactly like Mikki Lee's, was swept into a stylish French braid and adorned with a red lacquer barrette.

"Mommy, can you comb my hair like that? With a red barrette, too, please?" Mikki Lee asked pleadingly. Hair ornaments hold a wonderful fascination for her. This time, she was also intrigued by the little girl wearing them. They looked as if they could have been sisters. Same hair color, same curious blend of ethnic looks.

Her parents, catching my eye as I looked up, gave me a friendly smile. I stared.

"Jewish men!" exclaimed Mildred. "Almost every Caucasian father here is Jewish!"

Startled by her unexpected outburst, I quickly looked around the room. Mildred was right. Approximately 20 couples had arrived with their children and more than half were of the Asian mother/Jewish father combination.

"No wonder Mrs. Krautzmacher's daughter can't meet a nice, Jewish boy," said Mildred shaking her head. "They're marrying Asian women. Poor Rhonda." I murmured sympathetically and was interrupted by an insistent little voice at my side.

"Well, can she have a donut?" asked a small boy holding up a white bakery box.

Mikki gave the crullers a doubtful look.

"*Ho ho sik*!" said his mother with an encouraging smile.

I held my breath. Mikki Lee gingerly picked one out of the box and thanked the boy in a shy voice.

"*Daw jyeh*."

She answered in Chinese! My daughter spoke to someone in Chinese! I was thrilled.

"*Geshmakt*?" asked Mildred, tenderly brushing crumbs off of Mikki Lee's cheek. "Did that taste good?"

"*Bao doe say*!" answered Mikki cheerfully, munching on the last piece of her cruller. "I'm so full I could die!"

"Me too!" shouted the little boy next to her. His mother beamed.

"*A shainen dank*," said Mildred.

"Yes, thank you very much - oh! I mean, *Daw jyeh nay*," I added, trying in vain to keep my tongue from slipping and stumbling through Chinese, Yiddish and English.

We all laughed at the unwieldy mixture of languages being tossed around good-naturedly.

I fit in here. I felt an odd sense of home. In this little intercultural microcosm, there were other Chinese women who, like myself, had chosen Jewish mates. In raising their American children, they were also faced with the challenge of blending complex identities, languages and cultural questions. Throughout the studio, I could see other Asian/Jewish couples shifting naturally from one language to another, one culture to another. It was too good to be true. Here, in this strange and wonderful moment, any child who was not biracial, trilingual or an offspring of an unusual marriage would clearly be at a disadvantage.

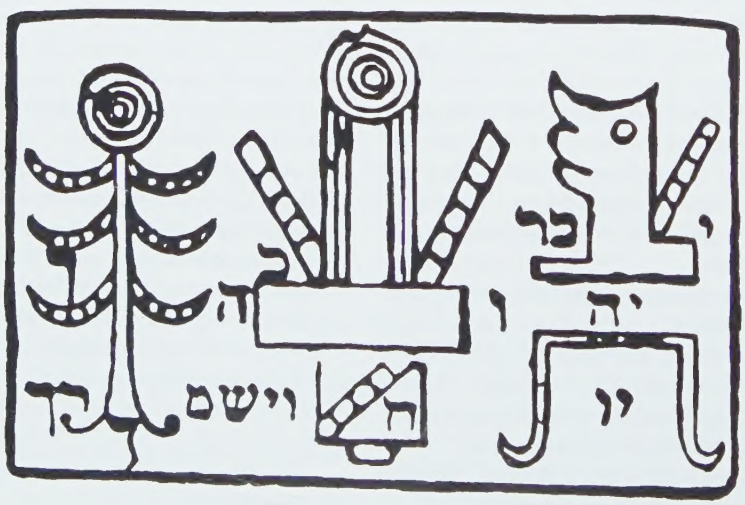
Weeks later, I spoke to the publicist for "Miss Saigon". A Philippino/American boy was selected from among the 30 children who auditioned that day.

Am I disappointed that Mikki Lee did not get the role? In view of the joyful reaffirmation of my Chinese-Jewishness, somehow it does not seem all that important.

Hoong Yee Lee Krakauer is a cartoonist and writer currently finishing a comic strip about an interracial/ interfaith family, namely, her own.

THE POWER OF WOMEN'S FOLK JUDAISM

BY JANE LITMAN



1.

As women, we sometimes view Judaism through the lens of "Otherness". That is, the institutional Judaism that has been handed down to us through the ages mostly reflects the thoughts and interests of men. Additionally, what synagogue practice we've inherited from our foremothers is often filtered through the distance of a balcony looking down or from behind a curtain looking out.

Subconsciously (though we generally deny it), we tend to look over our shoulders for a male, Orthodox rabbinic authority to tell us what is *really* Jewish. But this wasn't always the case with women. Historically, our foremothers were often bolder, more autonomous and more religiously imaginative than we Jewish women are today. Prior to the 18th-century innovation of mixed seating in liberal congregations, and all the egalitarian reforms (women minyan members, aliyot, b'not mitzvah, rabbis, cantors) that it presaged, generations of Jewish women lived their spiritual lives if not exactly out of bounds, then at least beneath the notice of rabbinic authority.

What do I mean by this?

Two examples:

Anthropologist Barbara Johnson of Goddard tells the story of the women of Jewtown in Cochin, India in the 1970's as it became evident that the community was dying as most of its young people moved to Israel and other places. The women could not find anyone in the Jewish community strong enough to operate the Passover wheat grinder.

The only other mill in town was owned by Hindus, and, according to Jewish law, there was absolutely no way to make this mill kosher for Pesach. Still, the Jewish community needed matzah flour, so the women created their own private ritual and decided that was good enough. They arrived at the mill first thing in the morning, ahead of any other customers, and cleaned the grinder with a pure, totally white cloth (reminiscent of the bedikah clothes observant women use to check for their menstrual flow); they said prayers for purity (adapted from mikveh prayers) and then did their own grinding. Wisely, they refrained from checking out their process with any rabbinic authorities.

From the sixteenth century to the present, Ashkenazi Jewish women have

used folk prayers (called *techinas*), which were recited in plain, homey Yiddish, rather than in Hebrew, and concerned down-to-earth subjects to express their spiritual sensibilities. One of my favorites is, "Oh God on high, please let my kugel rise." Another *techina* seems to have been recited when women lied to their husbands about whether or not they had gone to the mikveh. The women gave themselves religious permission, by speaking directly to God, to circumvent rabbinic law.

The very existence of these rituals and *techinas* attests to the fact that there is, in Jewish life, a female tradition allowing women's self-created folk practices to supercede rabbinic dicta.

Jewish folklore is full of references to women herbalists, healers, and purveyors of spells and charms. The Talmud goes so far as to say, "*Hakshayra shebanashim ba'alat kishafim* " ("Even the most kosher of women is really an accomplished witch.") From the rabbis' perspective this is a derogatory statement—but a feminist scholar might view this characterization as a tribute to women's prayer and ritual. Rabbinic authorities repeatedly condemn various women's religious practices such as throwing stones into boiling water, setting egg-laying hens in particular locations, and biting the stem off the etrog at the conclusion of Sukkot (to spur conception for the infertile), but such cryptic practices would not have required prohibition, of course, had women not been actively engaged in these singularly female folk ceremonies.

Rabbi Julie Greenberg tells of a ritual she enacted during her child's birth that she borrowed from an 1805 text, Sefer HaTishbi. In this text, a male authority (writing for other males), scolds medieval Jewish women for performing a superstitious childbirth ritual. "I don't believe in these things," the author writes, but then, interestingly, he goes on to describe the ritual in detail:

"It is widespread among Ashkenazim to draw a circle with carbonate of soda or with black coal around the walls of the room in which the birthgiver lies. Then on each wall one writes, "Adam and Eve without Lilith", and on the inside of the door one writes the names of

2.

three angels: Sanoy, Sansonoy and Samangalof." [These angels are also known as Sanvi, Sansanvi and Samen galef.]

Greenberg used this ritual (with modifications) when she herself gave birth. "I was in active labor in the hospital birthing suite, and four of my women friends were with me. First we made Shabbas with homemade candles, and then we followed the ritual described in Sefer HaTishbi which was intended, of course, to keep danger away. It felt really exciting to reconstruct the ritual, but I was too far along in my labor to concentrate very well. Next time—which is in two weeks—I intend to do the ritual in early, not active, labor, while I'm still at home."

How does Greenberg explain, living as she does in the 20th century, her use of sympathetic magic, charms, incantations or amulets?

"In Judaism," she says, "Our practices may stay the same, but our attitudes towards them change. For example, we no longer believe that the mezuzah wards off demons; today we value mezuzahs as the mark of a Jewish home. Similarly with this ritual. In the past, we can imagine that women conceptualized three actual angels who flew from heaven to earth to intercede at a birth. But when *I* use the ritual with my friends, we have in mind the abstract value of protection—a sort of symbolic way of expressing the same desire."

In some communities, the power of "primitive" rituals continues undiminished. In Ethiopia, Jewish women retired to special dwellings when they were menstruating. There they did not work, and were brought food. Israeli rabbinic authorities have had difficulty understanding why Ethiopian women in Israel today still want to build community menstrual dwellings [see LILITH, Winter 1988]. Today, some Ethiopian women in Israel who are unhappy with this situation remain secluded in their bedrooms or on a balcony during their periods. About one year ago a group of Ethiopian women near Tel Aviv rented a menstrual seclusion apartment and have been using it unbeknown to the rabbinic authorities. Recently, after a great deal of pressure, the authorities relented, and the women now publically adhere to their traditional practices.

It is important for us to remember that Jewish women throughout the ages and in every land have devised their own Jewish customs to fit their needs. But the issue of source material—of female Jewish precedent—remains a frustration. Even when, as individuals or as a group, we give ourselves permission to remake Jewish practice, how do we find sources for women's observances in Jewish history?

Generally *bubbe meisehs* (literally, stories from our grandmothers) as well as ethnographic studies and oral histories are more helpful to us than traditional texts. My Jewish women's group, for example, interviewed our grandmothers. Among other things, we found out that Jewish women have a custom of biting, not cutting, thread (in order not to "sew up our brains.") For protection, we tie

pieces of red string on babies' cribs or sickbeds, and we make noises like "pi pi" while sprinkling salt.

Archeology gives us clues, too. When amulets are unearthed, or incantation bowls, small household figurines or pouches of dried seeds, beads or shells, they often clarify cryptic texts for us. For example, Genesis 31:19-35 tells the story of Rachel surreptiously taking the household "teraphim." Archeology tells us that "teraphim" are most likely female figurines found in great abundance in Israel, even in the priestly households. What these figurines were used for is unclear; modern scholars are (in my opinion) far too hasty in their charges of idolatry. Contemporary Ethiopian women make very similar figurines, which are sacred art, but not idolatrous in its common meaning.

3.

Professor Bernadette Brooten has uncovered a number of ancient tomb inscriptions which illuminate Talmudic texts which refer in Hebrew to *kohenot* (priestesses) and matrons. These inscriptions describe women in positions of spiritual leadership as elders, priestesses, mothers of synagogues (the term used is "mater synagogue") and even synagogue presidents.

Scholars like Rabbi Marcia Plumb search ancient Jewish texts for throwaway comments about women's customs which are sometimes embedded in rabbinic discussions dealing with entirely other matters. For example, the Talmud (Sotah 6:1) says, "If a man warned his wife [not to be alone with another man], and she still went with [the other man], if the husband heard about it even from a flying bird, he could divorce her. But Rabbi Joshua says, [He is not allowed to divorce her] until the women that spin their yarn in the moonlight gossip about her." It is tempting to imagine a modern Jewish women's ritual in which we come together to spin yarn (and perhaps yarns) in the moonlight.

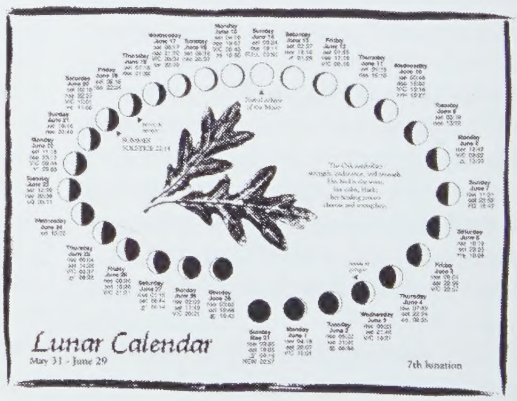
The women of "Shabbat Shenit," a feminist minyan in Los Angeles, created a celebration from this fragmentary reference from Ta'anit, the Talmudic book of festival listings: "There were no happier times for the daughters of Israel than the 15th of Av [the second full moon of summer) and Yom Kippur, for on them the daughters of Jerusalem went forth to dance in white garments, and these were borrowed, so that no one would be ashamed." On Tu b'Av (the 15th, the full moon of mid-summer, this year July 25th) a group of women came together and traded white garments. They read together two passages in the Bible which describe women's holidays which might be Tu b'Av. One is the story of the daughter of Jepthah (Judges 11:37-40) and the other the account of the kidnap of the women of Shiloh (Judges 21:19-21). After reading these stories they created their own group midrash:
When the women heard that Jepthah vowed to sacrifice his daughter, they went with her out to the hills, the forests, and the vineyards to hide her. They wore white, the ancient Jewish color of mourning, and they exchanged their clothes to make it hard to determine which woman was indeed Bat Jepthah. They could not find a hiding place safe enough, so they decided to send her to the moon, where she would certainly be safe. So they called her "*levannah*"—white one, or "moon". Once a year the women go out to dance, and on that day (the full moon of mid-summer) Levannah, the daughter of Jepthah, joins them. They wear white and exchange their clothing so that when she visits, no pursuer will find her.The women of this L.A. minyan then went out to dance and sing songs under the full moon, creating a new Jewish women's holiday celebration from an overlooked fragmentary text.

These efforts to revive women's folk Judaism are but quilt pieces to which we must add our own imaginations. Besides those of us who are creating new customs and reclaiming the bubbeh meisehs of our foremothers, some Jewish craftswomen are borrowing from the past, too.

4.

Ceramic artist Claire Sherman uses traditional Jewish amulets as a model for contemporary feminist ones; potter Lia Rosen borrows images from Jewish Persian incantation bowls when she makes her new-moon bowls. (The old bowls were used to trap demons; you pushed all the demons into a small space and then put a bowl over them. Women asserted religious power in this way.)

The late artist Ruth Hafsadi made a series of prayer-shawls on which she painted the Temple wall in celebration of the "Women at the Wall." She, and artist Shonna Husbands-Hankin use feminine names for God (like Shechina and Yah) on the crowns of their lavender, pale blue and pink silk prayer shawls. Rose Tamler creates extraordinary prayer shawls out of lace, ribbon, and other traditionally "feminine" items. Fabric artist Ita Aber incorporates into her tallises an "L" shaped design found on women's clothes from the Bar Kochbah cave excavations.



5.

We must reclaim our *bubbeh meisehs*, build from the past, experience the present and look always to our futures. True rituals, artifacts, songs, folk prayers and customs arise from the felt needs of ordinary Jewish women. Women like you and me. After all, the tradition needs to be ours, too.

PREGNANT? DON'T EAT RADISHES.

BY EMILY TAITZ

Even before the Talmud was written, the sages, while attempting to codify all aspects of life, virtually ignored the birth process. Except for questions pertaining to Sabbath observance (if a birth occurs on a Saturday) or to the Temple sacrifice required for a woman after childbirth, no specific procedures or prayers were set down. Because of this, Jewish women were freer to develop their own customs. They exchanged charms and prayers with each other and with women of other cultures, and borrowed amulets or stones believed to be helpful during pregnancy and labor.

In a time when childbirth was the biggest threat to the lives of women, any method—from fumigation with combinations of herbs, to eating or drinking special foods, to prayers and magic—might be used to insure an easy labor and a safe delivery. Some of these customs date back to biblical times when it was widely believed that Lilith was the evil spirit who snatched newborns from their mothers. Other customs were adapted later from pagan or Christian cultures.

Although some of the following methods may seem strange, even ridiculous, to a modern scientific mind, they were "tried and true" to the many women who resorted to them, as well as to the sages, doctors and holy men who wrote them down in books for the benefit of others.

If you or someone you love is pregnant and you want to leave no stone unturned in insuring the safety of mother and child, try some of these favorites:

• To ease labor, get someone to run to a nearby synagogue and open the ark, symbolically opening the way for the baby. Even better, wrap the Torah scroll around the laboring woman's body.

• Untie everything in the room or house for the purpose of opening the birth canal. (More sympathetic magic here—"like" encouraging "like.") Unknot ropes, shoestrings, undo belts, open cupboards, closets, doors, windows.

• It was believed that it takes a lot of strength and sexual potency to deliver a baby. A woman in labor can "borrow" the strength from someone believed to have "excess" sexual power. She can hold a piece of clothing belonging to the stronger person, or, more intimately, she can drink the milk of a woman who has recently given birth.

• A birthing woman should drink water from seven wells. To prevent difficulties, never eat radishes while pregnant.

• Certain prayers aid delivery: Psalm 121 speaks of "going out" and thus parallels what one wants the baby to do; Exodus 11:8 helps because it ends with the words "go forth."

• There is a magical arrangement of letters borrowed from the Christian magical charm Sator Square. Write the Hebrew letters shin, aleph, tet, vav, and resh (their significance has been long forgotten) five times on pieces of parchment or pottery, and place them under the woman's head.

• Or, write these same five letters on the parchment of a deer and put it in her mouth while she's in labor.

• Place a magnet or a metal coin on the mother's abdomen to lure the baby out. (Iron was believed to possess magical power against demons.)

• Place a bowl of water under the birth stool to drive away demons. After the birth, lay the child on the earth, or rub the child with salt, or whisper the names of the three protecting angels ("Sanvi, Sansanvi, Samengalef") in the baby's ear.

• As soon as the baby is born, someone (preferably the father) should draw a magic circle around mother and child with a new knife with a black handle. This can be done even before the baby is born, or during the Saturday night havdalah prayers while the father is wrapped in a prayer shawl.

• To keep evil spirits away, light a candle for three nights before and three nights after the circumcision.

• Wash the newborn child in oil which you then send to the synagogue to be used in the eternal light.

Emily Taitz is co-author (with Sondra Henry) of Written Out of History: Our Jewish Foremothers *(Biblio Press,), and several biographies. Her dissertation is on the Jews of France in the Middle Ages.*

1. & 3. *The images pictured here are from an amulet designed to ward off Lilith, the child-stealing witch. Plaques like these are still available today and can be purchased in a few Jewish bookstores in New York or in Israel. [Ask for a birth charm.] In a concession to modern-day scientific development, the magic formulas are now written on paper instead of deer parchment, and are encased in plastic. (Photo: Tamar Taitz Fields)*

2. *This incantation bowl reads, "Blessed be those who enter beneath the wings of Shechina." Potter Lia Lynn Rosen makes assorted bowls, blessing shields and seder plates all relating to emerging Jewish women's spirituality. To reach her for commissions, slide lectures or hands-on spiritual pottery workshops, write to the artist at 4524 9th St. N.W., Albuquerque NM 87107. (Photo: Denis Galloway)*

4. *This ceramic amulet, by artist Claire Sherman, is for protection against earthquakes. The text is the beginning of Psalm 125. Sherman also makes amulets for fertility, easy labor, and other occasions. To order, write to her at 1208 Milvia St., Berkeley CA 94709.*

5. *What did it feel like for our foremothers whose sense of time derived entirely from the moon? Did they visit menstrual lodges? Did they menstruate aligned with the moon's phases (as some reasearch indicates)? Did they work, dance, make love according to crescent, or gibbous, moons?*

If you're interested in more deeply-felt explorations of the ;lunar year, try out this haunting, beautiful calendar where time circulates in a spiral instead of marching across a grid. The 1992 lunar calendar is $15.95 from Luna Press, Box 511, Kenmore Station, Boston MA 02215.

In Search of the Ideal Shul

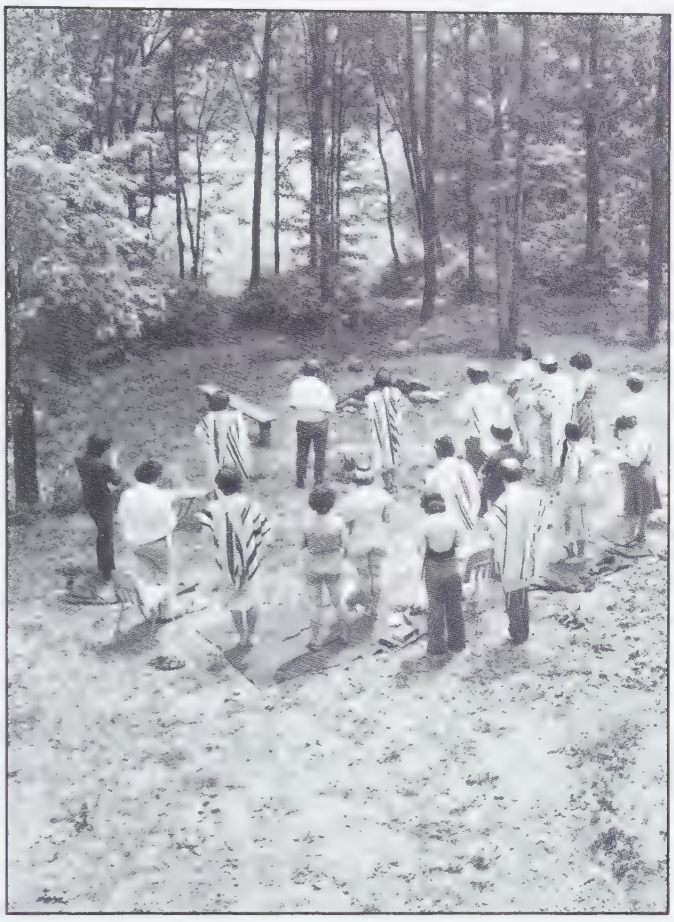
by Christie Balka

Men, women and children scramble into the aisles, spreading *tallesim* [prayer shawls] over their heads at this call to bless the Torah. From the back of this austere Quaker meeting house, all that is visible is a sea of *tallesim*: some are the usual white with blue borders; some are multi-colored fabric from Central America; while some are made of yellowing lace. The room is filled to capacity: five hundred Jews have turned out for Rosh Hashana services at the new congregation.

The scrambling stops and five hundred voices join in, taking part in an *aliyah*, an honor usually reserved for the most knowledgeable or wealthy members of a congregation. When the Torah reading is complete, we recite a *shehechiyanu* [a blessing of gratitude for something new] and break into song. Then something unexpected happens: people stream out of the double doors at the back of the room and onto the lawn, improvising a circle dance in the mid-morning sun.

This *aliyah*, to mark Mishkan Shalom's founding, typifies the Philadelphia-area synagogue's commitment to transform religious life, Jewish communal affairs, and secular society. Founded three years ago, Mishkan Shalom now has a full-time rabbi, 150 member-households (a term which acknowledges the diversity of members' living arrangements), and is searching for a permanent home. It is distinguished from other congregations by its adherence to two principles that are basic to feminism: an openness to the experiences of the oppressed, and a commitment to transform the world so that structures of oppression no longer exist.

Indeed, openness to the experiences of the oppressed is at the heart of founding rabbi Brian Walt's understanding of Judaism. A native of South Africa, Walt learned as a child about the yellow star the Jews were forced to wear during the Holocaust. At the same time, around age ten, he recalls: "I would always pass a little newsstand on my way to grade school, and every day a police truck would come up to the stand and callously ask Blacks for passes. Then they would throw a certain number of Blacks onto the truck and cart them away. When I heard that half a million Blacks were arrested in South Africa each year on pass law offenses I wondered, 'Why didn't the world speak up?', as it had failed to do during the Holocaust."



Bill Aron

As a college student Walt became active in the anti-apartheid movement. Later he left South Africa because "there was no context to live as a committed Jew and to be active in the anti-apartheid movement: you quickly became a pariah in the Jewish community." South Africa also lacked opportunities to study Judaism in a non-Orthodox setting. Walt came to the United States in 1974 and studied at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, where he was ordained in 1984. He served as rabbi of Beth Israel congregation in Media, Pennsylvania for four years before leaving to form a synagogue devoted to integrating Judaism's ethical teachings and its practice in pursuit of *tikkun olam* ["repair of the world"].

Jews from a variety of backgrounds have been drawn to this vision. Some, like Natalie and Harold Gorvine, have been involved in Jewish life for as long as they can remember: she is a former Hebrew teacher and he teaches at a Jewish day school. "Throughout our adult lives, we were always affiliated with a congregation, but there is a big difference between affiliation and commitment," she says. Before becoming involved with Mishkan Shalom, Natalie says she took Judaism for granted: "There were certain things I did automatically [such as observing the Sabbath and giving charity], but now I do things more consciously." She credits the rabbi ("one of the first clergy people whom I consider really spiritual") with some responsibility for her new consciousness, and the fact that she no longer feels the need to completely separate her love of Judaism from her concern for social justice.

No longer compartmentalizing her life also attracted Ann Ellen Dickter to this congregation. Dickter recalls that she "spent a lot of time synagogue-hopping" prior to finding Mishkan Shalom. As a single woman throughout her thirties, "synagogues never knew quite what to do with me." A longtime activist in the Wages for Housework Campaign [an organization committed to seeking economic justice for women], Dickter recalls that she was "involved in the political Left in the Sixties where I saw rampant anti-Semitism, which I always rejected. Being Jewish was always important to me, but there never seemed to be a way to reconcile this part of my life with my political activism."

A four-page statement of principles spells out Mishkan Shalom's desire to integrate the personal with the political, the spiritual with the activist, and concern for the Jewish people with concern for others. One of its singular features is its desire to embrace "those Jews among us whom the Torah and the Jewish community have rejected or made invisible: gay men and lesbians, the unmarried, the poor, the disabled, the elderly, Jews by choice, the unlearned." [see page 23]. Inspired by feminist values of inclusiveness, the statement also welcomes non-Jewish partners of Jewish congregants. Not surprisingly, these elsewhere disenfranchised groups have contributed time and energy disproportionate to their numbers to build the synagogue.

Mishkan Shalom's dedication to reach out to these groups doesn't stop with its statement of principles. For example, a month after the synagogue was founded, Walt suggested planning a *Shabbat* evening service focused on the needs of lesbian and gay Jews. The service took an approach that has become characteristic of many Mishkan Shalom services: it incorporated the words of a particular group (in this case lesbians and gay men) into the service through poetry, prose and music.

Lesbian and gay community members shared their life stories. This service led to discussions, both formal and informal, on myriad subjects of concern to lesbian and gay members, from what to do about heterosexist images in the liturgy to incorporating lesbian and gay role models into the school curriculum. In part because of these activities, Mishkan Shalom is now one of the few synagogues in the United States that can boast a mem-

The Un-Shul Shul

A High Holiday visitor to Mishkan Shalom shares her impressions:

The first great sign was how informally everyone was dressed—at best, like they'd ordered from the *Land's End* catalogue—no ties, no heels, some men in shorts. The *aliyahs* were all communal. Very moving! One was for anyone who'd had or adopted a baby that year (the *bima* was thronged), another for people whose life had significantly changed during 5751, another for those with family in Israel, another for people suffering from AIDS, cancer or other life-threatening illnesses.

After the *Haftorah* reading (about Hannah's infertility), a congregant spoke about her own personal, emotional adoption of a baby—it really connected the congregation to the text in a stirring way.

The rabbi's talk, a tour de force of ethical community-building (the content was the Gulf War) was reminiscent of Martin Luther King in his bold call for civil responsiveness and action. A pile of fundraising pamphlets on the front porch of the *shul* called for donations to three earmarked peace organizations in Israel (including one that transports Palestinian fruits and vegetables to economic markets).

A slew of preschoolers were gluing and cutting holiday-related crafts in one room while in another room two consecutive children's services (for different age groups) had the kids' full attention. On Yom Kippur afternoon there were two workshops—one a discussion of Jewish sources and values about war and peace; another 'an experiential ritual' about forgiveness.

I'm told that the Hebrew school is held cleverly on Saturdays (while parents pray) so attendance is high at both. Services ended with a really *haimish* potluck picnic—hummous, pasta primavera, lots of health-foody fare. This congregation should definitely remain a secret.

—*Susan Schnur*

bership of both gay and straight Jews. These activities also serve as a model for incorporating other marginalized groups into the mainstream of synagogue life.

For Carol Towarnicky, Mishkan Shalom's openness to interfaith families was an initial draw, but "exposure to different kinds of lifestyles and family configurations ...has been a wonderful experience. People like us wouldn't really get a sense of the similarities and differences [between our family and other families] without Mishkan Shalom. It's been really good for our children."

Of equal importance to Mishkan Shalom's membership is a commitment to act on behalf of those who have been dispossessed at the hands of governments. One expression of this commitment is its support for a refugee family from El Salvador. Luis Ramos described his family's journey to the United States at Mishkan Shalom's founding service. A trade unionist, Ramos was harassed by left-wing guerrillas and government-backed death squads alike. When he quit his union, the harassment persisted, so Luis, his wife Sonia, and their three children fled from El Salvador. Upon entering the United States, they were arrested and held in a detention center for a year, until being released on bond with assistance from members of Mishkan Shalom.

Two years after the Ramos family arrived in Philadelphia, six Jesuit priests were fatally shot by government-backed death squads in San Salvador. One night in December 1989, Luis Ramos again addressed the congregation, explaining why he had begun a hunger strike and asking for the congregation's support in opposing U.S. military aid to El Salvador. Despite her hesitance about public speaking, Sonia also spoke that night, about her reluctant activism and her faith in God. Rabbi Walt spoke about the imperative of the *shema* [a core Jewish prayer beginning "Hear O Israel"] to witness against oppression directed toward any group, and he led the congregation in saying *kaddish* [the mourners' prayer] for the six who were killed.

Since that night, the congregation has renewed its support for the people of El Salvador, establishing a formal relation

continued on page 23

"Illuminate[s] two of the more important aspects of modern religion generally: the changing role of women and the resurgence of traditional faith."
—Robert Wuthnow, author of *Meaning and Moral Order*

Tradition in a Rootless World
Women Turn to Orthodox Judaism
LYNN DAVIDMAN

"'Must' reading for theorists in the role of religion in so-called 'secular' society, and for feminist theorists who seek to interpret the contemporary interaction of gender and religion."
—Beverly W. Harrison, author of *Our Right to Choose*

University of California Press
Berkeley Los Angeles New York Oxford

"RAISES important questions for Jewish feminism."
—Judith Plaskow, author of *Standing Again at Sinai*

$24.95 cloth, 250 pages
At bookstores or order toll-free 1-800-822-6657.
Visa & MasterCard only.

What, then, is spirituality?

by Rachel Naomi Remen

What then is the spiritual? I find it difficult to define directly. It's much easier to say what it isn't than what it is.

For example—the spiritual is often confused with the moral, but it's not the moral. Morality is concerned with issues of right and wrong. Although often attributed to the "godhead," morality actually has a social basis and reflects a social tradition or consensus. What is considered moral varies from culture to culture and from time to time within the same culture. Furthermore, morality often serves as the basis for judgment, for one group of people separating themselves from other groups, or one individual separating from others. Yet the spiritual is profoundly non-judgmental and non-separative. The spiritual does not vary from time to time because it is not within time. Spirit is unchanging.

The spiritual is also different from the ethical. Ethics is a series of values, a code for translating the moral into daily life. It defines the right way to relate to other people, to carry out business and to behave in general. If the moral is not the spiritual, then the ethical isn't either.

The spiritual is also not the psychic. The psychic is a capacity we all share, although it is better developed in some than in others. It is a way of perceiving—a sort of direct knowing of conditions in matter or in consciousness. We may use a psychic power to know the spiritual—but that which we know is not the means by which we know. As a way of perception, the psychic is closely related to our other senses. If psychic perception is spiritual—then seeing is spiritual and hearing is spiritual. A sense is simply a way of gaining information about the world around us. How I use what I see or hear, what it means to me, is what makes it a matter of spirit or not. I can use the psychic as I can use my other senses—to impress others, to accumulate personal power, to dominate or manipulate—in short to assert my separateness and my personal power. The spiritual however is not separative. A deep sense of the spiritual leads one to trust not one's own lonely power but the great flow or pattern manifested in all life, including our own. We become not manipulator but witness.

Oddly, the psychic is often used to "prove" the spiritual to the non-believer. Yet the spiritual is the one dimension of human experience which does not require proof—which lies beyond (and includes) the very mind which demands proof.

Lastly, the spiritual is not the religious. A religion is dogma, a set of beliefs about the spiritual and a set of practices which arise out of those beliefs. There are many religions and they tend to be mutually exclusive. That is, every religion tends to think that it has "dibs" on the spiritual—that it's "The Way." Yet the spiritual is inclusive. It is the deepest sense of belonging and participation. We all participate in the spiritual at times, whether we know it or not. There's no place to go to be separated from the spiritual, so perhaps one might say that the spiritual is that realm of human experience which religion attempts to connect us to through dogma and practice. Sometimes it succeeds and sometimes it fails. Religion is a bridge to the spiritual—but the spiritual lies beyond religion. Unfortunately in seeking the spiritual we may become attached to the bridge rather than crossing over it.

The most important thing in defining spirit is the recognition that spirit is an essential need of human nature. There is something in all of us that seeks the spiritual. This yearning varies in strength from person to person but it is always there in everyone. And so, healing becomes possible. Yet there is a culture-wide tendency to deny the spiritual—to delegate it at best, to ignore it at worst. In trying to point to it with a definition, I hope to initiate a kind of questioning of the role of spirit in health, in sickness, in life.

From "On Defining Spirit," *Noetic Sciences Review*, Autumn, 1988.
© Institute of Noetic Sciences. Photo: Kathy Sillman.

"What the ark is to the Jewish male, my dish cupboard is to me."

Three autobiographical paintings and a photograph, with exegesis:

by Nancy Winternight

Dancing With Dishes

One day my cousin Jennifer, whom I love, dropped in to visit me. I showed her my new diningroom cupboard, an inheritance from my late mother-in-law. We took out and admired my Depression-glass dishes, which I was given by my maternal grandmother. As a child, I cherished eating from these dishes which Grandma used only once a year, on Passover. As Jennifer and I talked facing the cupboard, that feeling came over me: This is going to be a painting.

Jennifer and I are "Dancing with Dishes"—there's no holding us back. The *matrushkas* (nesting dolls) in my breakfront are to me like the many generations of Russian women in my family.

The menorah on the bottom left shelf belonged to my great-grandmother, who brought it from the old country. The photograph on the upper left shelf of my cupboard shows Jennifer's father and mine as young boys in New Haven. They're posed wearing fancy shirts and shorts, pretending to share a book.

After I finished the body of "Dancing with Dishes", I started in on a border, not really knowing exactly what I wanted to do. I stopped frequently to study the canvas. Suddenly I realized that I was creating a religious painting—a sacred ark! My heart was saying, "What the ark is to the Jewish male, my dish cupboard is to me."

My Father

My father died on my parents' twenty-third wedding anniversary. I was thirteen. Their wedding had been on the same day that the population of Doksyce (now in Lithuania) was taken into the woods by Nazis, shot and thrown into pits. All my maternal grandfather's family was there: Moshe, Shaina Basha, Velvel, Shepsel, and all the children.

Here my father washes dishes in a frilly pink apron—as feminine as it gets. A man doing what he pretends is a woman's job, a man feeling obvious delight.

In real life, I remember my father dancing with the dishtowel—an ecstatic being. He used to tease me by starting stories about his childhood with, "When *I* was a little girl...."

As I painted this portrait, whenever my brush touched the line that was the edge of my father's figure, an electric shock went through me. It was like he was with me, helping me paint the picture. It felt like conjuring.

Kneydl Soup

My mother's mother is 97; she's the one who gave me the Depression-glass dishes. Her entire life is devoted to cooking and serving food. That is the source of her pleasure, her reason for being.

For Grandma, food preparation is the religion. One evening when I saw her at the stove making matzah balls during the seder, I had a formal feeling—"She's performing the ritual of kneydl."

Here, she's not just cooking soup, but performing a kind of alchemy, brewing a concoction which will function to hold cousins together for generations to come.

There's a lot of purple light in this picture, suggesting magic.

At 13

When my daughter turned 13, all the women of my family gathered together. We each held a ritual object, wrapped in black tissue paper.

"Bhakta," I said to my daughter, "on your journey you will need four things. First, you will need to know where you come from."

From one of my aunts I took a necklace, a Jewish star. I said, "This necklace was given to me by my father, and now I am giving it to you."

"Next, you will need God's protection." I took a shawl from a second aunt and wrapped it around Bhakta's shoulders.

"You will need light to find your way." I then took Shabbat candlesticks from the third aunt, and placed them in Bhakta's hands.

"Finally," I continued, "You will need the wisdom and support of the women who love you." From my grandmother I took a tablecloth which I had appliqued, and on which all the women present had written wishes and words of wisdom.

When my father was 13, his mother was killed in a fire. She had rushed back into her burning home to rescue the maid (who survived).

My cousin Jennifer is named for my father's mother.

When *I* was 13—the day of my father's funeral—my cousin Jennifer came into my bedroom where I sat alone, forgotten by everyone. We didn't know each other well then at all.

She asked me about the Beatles. Which one did I like the best? I thought, "How kind of her."

Bhakta (left) and Nancy

Lubavitch Husband (former hippie) Walks

by Miriam Weiss-Katz

Steve and Miriam, hippies in Berkeley, CA, 1965.

For the first five years of our marriage, my husband and I were hippies in Berkeley, California. Devotees of an Indonesian religious sect that talked in tongues, Steve union-organized university workers, while I batiked and strung jewelry for a living. Our house was a crashpad for ultra-left-wing politicos; our kitchen was heavy on granolas.

When my sister Joycie married a Sufi, it sparked an identity crisis for both me and Steve. I found myself grieved that Joycie wasn't marrying a Jew, and boy, did my reaction surprise me. Suddenly I was reading *The Last of the Just*, and Steve and I were struggling to remember what little bits and pieces of Judaism we could. Steve started an Israeli stamp collection. We ran around Berkeley desperately seeking pastrami, bagels and half-sours; Telegraph Avenue was hardly a center for high-cholesterol, bubbe-and-zayde food staples.

I was in shock, alone, confused, trapped, terrified at giving up on my marriage. Both sets of parents had stopped talking to us because of our religious extremism.

Michael was born in '67 and David in '69, and by then our community had begun disintegrating into drugs, political fanaticism and meaningless, even callous, sex. Steve and I found ourselves saying, "The children should know their grandparents." Soon we had repatriated to Boston.

That next year, living with my in-laws, was a nightmare. Steve had no job, and I was more or less entirely responsible for an infant and a toddler. Steve, by this time, had become obsessed with Judaism. He sat by himself in the den for hours at a shot reading Maimonides and Spinoza, while fressing on Italian ham submarines from nearby Revere.

He shared nothing with me—his quest was not only inward and exclusive, but almost hostile. After twelve months he surfaced from the den, and we moved into our own house which we glatt-kashered. The children started attending a yeshiva, and Steve became a disciple of the chassidic Bostoner rebbe.

I was in shock, alone, confused, trapped, depressed, terrified at giving up on my marriage. Both sets of parents had stopped talking to us because of our religious extremism. Michael and David were now Yerachmiel and Reuven; Steve worked selling restaurant equipment during the day and studied at the rebbe's *shiur* at night.

Like a "good" wife and mother, I tried to adjust to everything. I went to my own women's study groups, but I hated the Orthodox women. I felt they were blind and passive (not like me—right!); I vented all my fury on them. Only on the Sabbath was I happy. I would lie in bed thinking about God (that was at least a relationship of my own), and then fall into the only restorative sleep of the week.

One day, after three years of this, I went to a lecture on "women's religious needs," given by an Australian Lubavitch woman. I asked her a question, and for the first time in literally years, someone actually heard the torment behind my words. "You feel torn in half as a *baalas teshuvah* (a newly religious Jew)," Atara answered me acceptingly. Finally someone was giving me permission to doubt and to seek. It was a turning point—the first time I was able to stop reacting to Steve's domination, and to consider the challenge of ultra-Orthodoxy on my own.

One day, Steve came home and announced that our family was moving to Brooklyn's Crown Heights; he'd taken a job in New York. Again, I worked hard to adapt. Like the old Berkeley days, our home again became a "crashpad"—but this time it was for *mekareving* (bringing people into ultra-Orthodox Judaism). I became a *shadchan* (matchmaker), arranging 22 marriages. My work was officially notarized and blessed by the Lubavitcher rebbe.

To this day it amazes me that Steve and I projected an image of a vivacious marriage. People know so little! Our home seemed to exude such warmth. On the Sabbath, people gathered contentedly, singing, eating, talking. It strikes me as bitterly ironic that as a trustworthy and popular *shadchan*, I knew unbelievably intimate things about everyone else, yet who knew the first thing about my seemingly ideal marriage—that it was a devastated, empty husk?

I knew unbelievably intimate things about everyone else, yet, who knew the first thing about my seemingly ideal marriage?

It was in the fifteenth year of our marriage (our eighth in Crown Heights) that everything crumbled. Steve stopped coming home six nights a week, and would appear only on the Sabbath (apparently, he couldn't stomach adultery on *Shabbos*). I eked through six months in a daze, took up chain-smoking, experienced panic attacks during which I couldn't breathe. Soon Steve stopped coming home altogether. For the next three years (we divorced in 1980), I was a single parent in an emotionally destroyed household. And we were suddenly financially impoverished.

Reuven and Yerachmiel were grief-stricken and angry. At ages 11 and 13, they started smoking, avoiding school and turning to drugs. Before entering the house, I used to pray that I wouldn't find anything terrible there. The boys stole money from me and watched T.V. on *Shabbos*, which, given my Lubavitch life, was a sickening blow. One day, home alone, the eleven year old drank every-

Steve and Miriam (wearing a shaytle), Crown Heights, Brooklyn, 1976

thing in the liquor cabinet and ended up hospitalized.

Steve left not only us—he left his entire life. He shaved his beard, cut off his *payess* (earlocks), and threw out his regulation black suits. Wearing leisure suits, driving a BMW and living on Long Island, his business prospering more than ever, he set out to seduce the boys with new-found freedoms and riches. And it wasn't hard.

Life with Mom was impoverished, full of restrictions, drab. At Dad's, the boys ate non-kosher Chinese dinners, smoked, partied with non-Jewish friends. At the ages of 13 and 15, they asked to live full-time with their father and his then-current girlfriend. (He had a series.) With unspeakable pain, and a feeling that fighting their wishes would be a profound mistake, I caved in to their request. I believed that I might best win them back by letting them go.

For the next few years, I actually functioned decently during the week. But on *Shabbos*, I felt strong enough to fall apart. I would light the candles and forget to say the blessing. I would cry to the candles; cry out my rage. I would walk into the boys' rooms and weep into their pillows. I couldn't sit in a chair or eat, I'd walk in and out of the house, in and out, go to shul, come back from shul, in and out. Only on the Sabbath was there a presence strong enough—was it God? angels in my sleep? the *neshama* (oversoul) that accompanies us on the seventh day?—to give me the fortitude that grieving requires, to hold my hand through the searing loneliness.

For six years, I saw David and Michael (those were their names again) for only the briefest of moments. I would go to their house—they weren't there. I would call—they would hang up on me. It was an extraordinary tribulation, and one that I shared with no one.

Top: Yerachmiel, 8, and Reuven, 6, in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Notice the tzitzit fringe.

Bottom: Miriam and her new husband, Ted Katz 1987.

Indeed, I learned the meaning of faith. Faith is the ability to continue doing *mitzvahs* (righteous acts) when you're alone, angry, broke. Faith is realizing that coming back to your empty house on the Sabbath and crying is not the worst thing in the world. My model became the young King David, all by himself in the fields, an outcast, nobody liking him, abandoned by his family. He had to have cried a lot, I told myself, like me. My extended family (including my twin sister, and another set of twin siblings) had continued, since the first days of my ultra-Orthodoxy, to shun me.

The mirror terrified me. Who was I? A matchmaker? A hippie who tie-dyed shirts? I wasn't a wife or even a mother anymore. Who had I been for the past twenty years? The scariest part was realizing fully for the first time that I'd never really chosen my life.

Gradually, I got on with living. I found a niche for myself in the modern Orthodox (not ultra-Orthodox) world. I took off my *shaytle* (wig) that I'd worn for eight years, and practiced a more lenient Judaism. I went to the beach and indulged in "mixed swimming"—men and women at the same beach—for the first time in ages. It felt fabulous.

The scariest part was realizing for the first time that I'd never really chosen my life . . . . My story could have never been a man's story, only a woman's.

I got an M.S. in special education, dated men, and started my first full-time job, teaching for the Board of Education. Before, I'd always worked part-time within the ultra-Orthodox community, thinking of myself as Steve's helpmate, not as a professional in my own right. Before, I always used to turn my check immediately over to Steve.

Slowly I discovered who I was: an opinionated, honest, private, fearful, fun-loving, loyal, generous-hearted, dependent and off-beat person. I realized that I am an intensely spiritual person after all, ever grateful to God who has been my rock throughout. Slowly, I became fiercely independent.

A year and a half ago—eight years after Steve walked out on me—my ex-husband got divorced yet again. Right after that Michael called me, and, as if we had spoken the day before, said, "Ma, can you help me with my English paper?"

"Sure," I said.

He came with his books on *Shabbos*, and we talked and talked.

A few weeks later my younger son, David, called to talk about his father's divorce. He mentioned that he had written about his Lubavitch childhood for a college course. The professor—probably shocked that this all-American kid had once been ultra-Orthodox—wrote back comments in Yiddish. David was very touched. It was his first successful reconnection to his childhood.

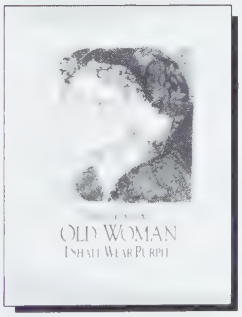
If a Gypsy fortuneteller had told me thirty years ago that this was the life I would lead, I would've laughed at her and refused to pay until she stopped screwing around and told me the truth.

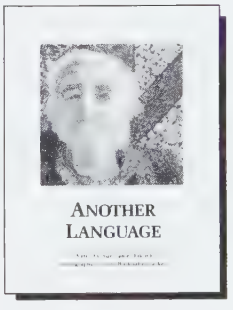
My story could never have been a man's story, only a woman's: lost for 25 years in a concoction of other people's needs and in my own fears and in dissimulation.

Sometimes one's own life takes forever to begin.

Miriam Weiss-Katz works as a language coordinator for special education classes in Queens, NY.

Beautiful Books from Award Winning Papier-Mache Press





WHEN I AM AN OLD WOMAN I SHALL WEAR PURPLE: This wonderful "paean to old women, aging women and the women who care for them" *(Indianapolis Star)* has become an underground best seller with more than 325,000 copies in print. Winner of 1991 ABBY Honors Award. $10.00 paperback, $16.00 hardcover.

BARE AS THE TREES: "Poet Sue Saniel Elkind skillfully threads together black pearls of poetry. . .'Krystalnacht' and '1939' are not mere recitations of the horror of the Holocaust, but speak out against all spiritual and human destruction." *Gerald Musinsky.* $8.00 paperback, $12.00 hardcover.

ANOTHER LANGUAGE: "Ms. Elkind discovered at the age of 64 that poetry provided a natural outlet for a life's worth of ideas and observations. In this collection she brings the reader a view of the world from the end of the trail. . .She writes in the face of life and the shadow of death, taking full advantage of her position to bring a clarity and knowledge to her narration." *Pittsburgh Press.* $8.00 paperback.

ORDERING INFORMATION

Send check with name and address to Papier-Mache Dept. LL, 795 Via Manzana, Watsonville, CA 95076-9154. Add $1.25 per item for shipping. California residents add 7.75% sales tax. Call 800-927-5913 for MasterCard and Visa purchases. THANK YOU!

Notes from Underground: Children Hidden During the Holocaust

The first thing that strikes me is how good-looking everyone is. I wonder, is it because it's a European crowd (there are over 500 here from Europe), or does it actually have something to do with their survivorship? Were they especially beautiful children who had, because of their beauty, squeezed through an infinitesimal crack in a brutal Nazi guard's heart? Some have stories to that effect—the German policeman who inexplicably whispered "run" to a five year old, the Polish woman who, faced with a "Sophie's choice" when caught hiding children, gave two up in exchange for keeping "this little hugging one." The crowd is, really, extraordinarily beautiful. The second thing that strikes me—also in the looks department—is how blond the room is. There are real blonds and fake blonds, but still, many more blonds per capita than one would find at a Hadassah convention or a CAJE conference. Every real blond, of course, means an Aryan-looking child, one who was more easily passed off as a Gentile's "orphaned niece" or a Catholic convent child. One woman says, "To this day, I walk down a busy street and see waves of hair—blond, black, blond, black, and what I am saying to myself is 'life', 'death', 'life,' 'death.'"

In the same way, a male survivor talks about gender. There are, after all, many times more women than men at the conference. "A circumcised penis meant death, " he says, "a child who was impossible to hide." One woman shares what happened when she was a teenager trying to hide a baby boy. "It was more and more impossible to hide with him," she says, because he was circumcized. "Finally, I was running through a field one day, knowing I was about to be caught. I handed my baby to someone, and I never saw him again. He would be 48 years old today. He looked like me." [Unexpressed are the words, "Have any of you seen him?"]

Of course, as with many of the people in this room, that baby (now if living, a middle-aged man) did not know his name. Surviving without knowing your name. Talk about loss! What a disorienting loss, something that many of the youngest survivors in the room share.

Another woman who also lost a baby boy says, "I swore to myself at that time that if I ever had more boys, I would never circumcise them. But now," she continues, "I have three grown sons, all born in America, all circumcised, two lawyers and a college professor."

A man says, "To this day, I can't urinate in a public men's room. If someone walks in, zzzzzzttt," he makes a motion indicating an abrupt stop. Two other men in the room agree. One mumbles in astonishment, "I've never met anyone before who has this same problem!"

"I wore a dress for two years," says one of the men. "The hardest thing was not urinating on my shoes." They laugh.

"For me the hardest thing was remembering my girl name," says another man, an attractive therapist here with his son. (It seems as if half the people the conference stand up and identi themselves as therapists.) "I was on three, and the Polish language has diff ent suffixes for male speakers and f females. I could never get it right. almost cost me my life."

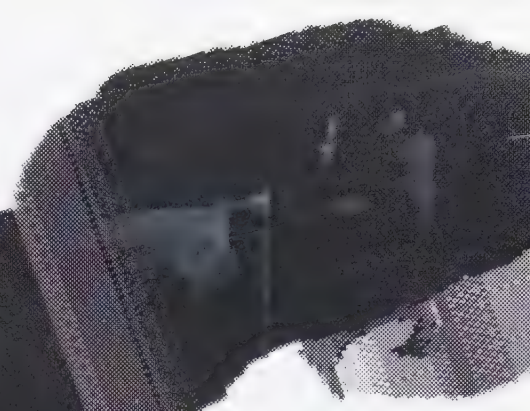
To get back to the blondness in t room. . . the fake blonds were of inte est, too. What does it mean—to a 2 ye old, or 4 year old, or 8 year old—to blond? It means to be safe. It means be "one of the strong ones" as on woman puts it. "To be Christian meant securi- ty to me. After the war, whe my fath came back to get me, remember thinking, 'Why should I g with this weak Jew? *These* people— my Christian house—are the ones wh can really take care of me and prote me. Here, I'm safe.'"

In the same way that blondne means safety, silence means safet Hiding safely, after all, meant silenc either absolute (if you were hidin beneath floorboards) or selective (if yo were hiding in an orphanage). It's ada tive to be silent, so that even openi one's mouth at this conference, aft years of silence, is something that ma cannot do. Speaking remains dangerous

Some of the conference attende have a lifelong ambivalence, a love-ha relationship, with both Judaism an Christianity. An awful lot have marrie non-Jews. Some have married more tha once—one time to a Christian, the ne time to a Jew, as if only in serial livi can they express the complexity—an

A Gathering of the Other Jewish

by Susan Schnur



exclusivity—of their lives, for they are *both* Jewish and Christian.

Everyone's story is different, and too idiosyncratic for invention. One woman tells how, as a girl, she begged and cried and screamed until her survivor-mother converted to Christianity too.

There are several pairs of siblings in which one is Christian and that you're Jewish." He actually whispers. He is an engineer and a Hebrew School teacher, married to a non-Jew. "The fear is inside of you," answers someone else. "Put the mezuzzah on that outside door and get the fear out of you." Another woman says, "I've had a mezzuzah in my diningroom drawer for over 40 years—I keep meaning to put it up, but something stops me."

Some formally converted back to Judaism as adults; several have known only for a couple of years that they are adopted and are biologically Jewish.

One woman cries as she speaks. "I'm so unhappy," she says. "I can't find my place—I'm not Jewish. I'm not Christian. I don't remember a thing about my real family." Another woman stands from the back of the room. "I'm her sister," she explains. "My sister was two when we went into hiding. I was five. I remembered a lot about my parents; I remembered my real whole name. I felt already really Jewish. I have had a happy life"—a life without the fundamental existential vaccum of some of the younger survivors.

Bleached blonds...mezuzzahs...two small expressions of more deeply felt issues of identity and safety. We have a discussion about mezuzzahs, a tiny detail in most of these people's lives, but one that we could examine for, oh, maybe a week?

One man says he has put mezuzzahs on every door on the *inside* of his house, but can't bring himself to put one on the outside of his house. "I'm still afraid of what it means for the public to discover

If there is any competition at all—and there is hardly any—it is subtly in the direction not of who has the most amazing story, a kind of Ripley's Believe-it-or-Not approach (which the press, with their cameras flashing everywhere, encourage), but of who is happiest. Loud applause goes to a woman who stands up, with rosy cheeks and a thick French accent, to tell her story of hiding in a convent. Her parents died in concentration camps. "I was ten when I went into hiding," she says. "I had a strong sense of my parents, of how my mother thought positively of me. I remember one thing in particular about my childhood. I used to write on the walls, to draw caricatures of my parents' friends after they'd gone home after a visit. My mother never scolded me for these or said, 'Oh, now I have to re-paint the walls.' No, she used to say, 'Camille—this is a good likeness,' and she'd laugh."

In the workshops, people stand to talk without regard to theme or subject. There is a sense of so much to say and so little time; so much to say for the first time. "I only heard my name once," says a woman. "I was hiding in a crawlspace in the kitchen—I didn't know my real name. I suppose I had forgotten it, or I was too young. It had probably been rehearsed out of me." (Many nods around the room—many had been "rehearsed out of" knowledge.) But a German soldier came in and he asked if _____ was here. I instinctively knew that was my name. I said it to myself over and over. I was four."

"Ah yes," answers another hidden child. "I remember hearing things in hiding, too. Early on, I heard a neighboring couple—they were also hiding a Jew—talking in the kitchen with the couple who was hiding me. 'Our Jew is an ungrateful Jew,' said the other couple. 'He whines and cries and complains. We don't like him.' 'Our Jew is a good Jew,' said my couple. 'He is grateful and sweet.' To this day I am 'grateful and sweet,'" says the grown hidden child. "Even then, if they said to me, 'Do you want to eat these rotten potatoes?' I would say, 'I love rotten potatoes.' I think I did love rotten potatoes. But who likes rotten potatoes?"

Small children have a way of encapsulating meaningful experience into one concrete memory. I have the sense that if each hidden child were told to relate only *one* sentence about her childhood, she would know immediately what to report.

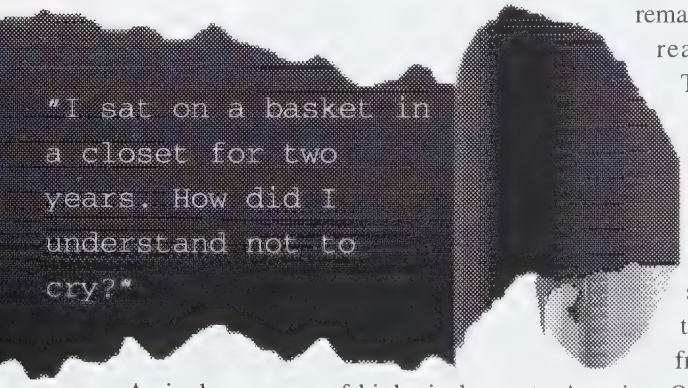
"I sat on a basket in a closet for two years," says one woman. She is finished talking. The others push her to go on. "I often wonder what made me sit so quietly," she adds, when pressed further. "How did I understand not to cry? Not to sneeze?" A lot of people's hands go up in recognition. "I always think about that," one woman says. "I was only three. How did I know to sit so silently, so uncom-

plainingly? We hid in the hay mow in the barn, and they used to come by with bayonets and throw them through the straw to see if anyone was hiding in there. I never peeped, never cried."

"I was three," says another woman. "My experience was like a piece of furniture. They passed me from house to house. My mother would come and take me, then move me to another house. Then she'd go back to the ghetto. I saw money exchange hands. No one ever explained a thing to me. Why didn't they? If they had only explained one thing. Just one thing."

Many people nod about feeling like "a piece of furniture." "You see, so you must explain things to your children," cries a child of a hidden child. Instead, we become new pieces of furniture."

"I too saw the money exchange hands," says another woman. "And the jewelry! I knew the people that took me didn't *like* me. They didn't *love* me. I knew that at four years old. Maybe I would be a different person today if I'd never seen the money."



A single memory of biological parents seems to be very important, something that could keep a child going through months and years of hiding and loneliness and deprivation. "I remember my parents leaving me in a strange house. 'We're going to come back with ice cream,' they said. "I never saw them again. But I often remembered what they said about the ice cream, and it made me happy."

"I remember my uncle's pocket—a piece of gum was in there. I often thought of the feel of that gum—putting my hand in his pocket and feeling it there."

There are many memories of parents who walked away from their children without saying goodbye, a vacuum that's still felt fifty years later. Ostensibly, the parents couldn't have borne to leave if they'd had actually to say goodbye. Many parents, it seems, walked away quickly or pretending casualness. It was too risky to say goodbye—physically, emotionally. What counted was the moment: the children would cry less if their parents didn't say goodbye. Maybe the parents knew that they couldn't say goodbye to their children without letting leak their hopelessness and knowledge of doom.

"If only I had one memory of them, just one," says a beautiful Dutch woman.

A different theme is touched on by a man who was a young teenager in hiding. "I was a product of a yeshiva education," he explains. "So what was happening seemed commonplace, to be expected. After all, I'd learned Jewish history, the Inquisition, pogroms, exiles. Jews had always hidden. By myself, I prayed every day. I wasn't afraid. What kept me company was history. I was part of history."

Many preface their remarks by saying, "I'm not really a hidden child." This means that they'd been either "hidden" in the open—in convents, or pretending to be gentiles, or fighting with anti-Jewish partisans in the woods, or they'd been sent away from family to England or to America. One man was a "feather boy"—he held a feather up to people's noses after they'd been shot and he counted to 20—to see if they were really dead. He was 8.) Still, they'd lost family, lost childhood, lost identity, had singular fears and lived with real effects from those years. Generally, someone answers these demurrers: "You *are* hidden."

One senses that the vague sense of "not really being a..." is a lifetime's nagging sense of being an imposter. "We're not really Holocaust survivors because we weren't in the camps," says one woman from Belgium. "Many of us have felt—until yesterday—that our experience somehow didn't really 'count.'"

Maybe 100-200 Righteous Gentiles are at the conference. Some of them have kept in touch with their 'hidden child' through the years; others are newly reunited; many are honored in an awards ceremony. Their presence makes us wonder: How does one inculcate altruism into a society? How can we, as Jews, teach ourselves the value of altruism? The Righteous Gentiles are modest. In Polish, one tells a story of how her hidden Jews—standing between the wallboards of a room—are saved and then almost lost because of paprika. "The Germans were coming with their dogs. I knew the dogs would smell the Jews. I panicked—what do I do? Someone said, 'paprika—sprinkle it everywhere. It will confuse the dogs!' I ran to a neighbor for paprika and came home and threw it everywhere. But then my Jews started sneezing. Luckily, the Germans passed over my house."

Later, in a workshop, a hidden child says, "It wasn't just Christians who saved Jews. Jews saved Jews too. "

"That's not possible," someone answers.

The first speaker hesitates. "Well, I was saved by a Jew."

He stops again and has to be encouraged to go on. "Well, the last time—and only time—I told this story, someone said to me, 'No one should survive at that price.'"

Everyone is quiet.

"My Jewish aunt saved me," he says. "Before the war, a boy had liked her—she detested him. Now he was a Nazi soldier. She went to him (she was caring for me then) and pretended to like him. She slept with him. Then she said, 'I'm pregnant with your child. If you want to make sure your child survives, help us hide through the war.' So he took care of us. Of course, my aunt wasn't pregnant. So she made love with someone else until she became pregnant. The baby saved us. But at 7 months, the baby died of malnutrition."

No one says anything. It is a group that understands, accepts and supports.

It is a group of real hidden children.

Some details have been changed to protect the identity of conference participants.

from Mishkan Shalom's Statement of Principles

On Prayer and Spiritual Life:
While the traditional liturgy fails to recognize the experience of women, our community is committed to a feminist reconstruction of Judaism. Toward this end, we are committed to reclaiming feminist images from our tradition, including new prayers and rituals which reflect the experience of women in our liturgy, using female God language, and empowering women to take religious leadership.

On Acts of Caring:
Currently, Mishkan Shalom joins with other spiritually-based communities to provide sanctuary to Central American refugees.

On Israel:
We are dedicated to the survival of Israel as an independent Jewish state in which Jews can live in dignity, continue and revive their traditions, and shape their own future. Our need to see a secure Israel, however, must not blind us to the suffering of the Palestinians, who also have ties to the land. The perpetuation of this suffering violates the Jewish commitments to justice and compassion. Jews and Palestinians must recognize and support one another's rights to national self-determination in the land they share and revere. Without this, there can be no peace and no security for either people. We therefore support those groups and individuals within Israel who are working for a just end to the conflict and a long-term solution based upon mutual recognition.

On Community Process:
We seek to be a community that embraces those Jews among us whom the Torah and the Jewish community have rejected or made invisible: gay men and lesbians, the unmarried, the poor, the disabled, the elderly, Jews by choice, the unlearned. We also strive to be a feminist community, one that empowers women, and that creates a process in which all people will feel welcome to contribute, to learn, and to teach. Mishkan Shalom welcomes all Jews and partners of Jewish congregants who share our values and our aspirations to a full Jewish life in a just world.

We encourage our members to take responsibility for congregational life and for the ongoing process that gives shape to that life....The relationship between the congregation and the rabbi is one of mutual respect based on shared responsibilities.

continued from page 12

ship with the village of Nuevo Gaulcho which has resulted in visits to the villages by members of Mishkan Shalom, humanitarian assistance, and a commitment to educate North Americans about the devastating effects of U.S. policy in Central America.

Mishkan Shalom's acceptance of lesbian and gay Jews, its work for peace in Central America, and many of its other endeavors stem from the value it accords the experience of the individual alongside the authority it grants *Torah*. While this may be a cornerstone of feminist theory, it is less common in Judaism. Yet Walt sees no contradiction here: "There are all kinds of people who've been isolated and excluded in their search to find meaning in Judaism. I really think that Jewish life in our time is impossible without the synthesis of their experiences. I don't believe it is possible for us to simply return to Judaism as *the* truth—it isn't!"

Yet understanding how women have been dispossessed within Judaism has posed the greatest challenge to Mishkan Shalom thus far. While women assume roles in the congregation not typically occupied by females in other synagogues–from leading services to teaching to serving in leadership positions on the board–they fill all the traditional roles as well. Women do nearly all of the caretaking work, from running the school to mobilizing the congregation in response to an illness or death in the congregation.

While feminist liturgy has been introduced into regular *Shabbat* services, the congregation nearly split apart when women held their own *Shabbat* morning service. Women and men work together on a variety of social justice projects, but there has been little conscious effort to analyze problems in Central America, the Middle East, or in Philadelphia's homeless shelters (one of which the synagogue has formally adopted), in terms of how they effect women.

Changes intent on providing women with equal access to Judaism have been relatively easily assimilated by Mishkan Shalom. For example, religious leadership is shared by women and men. Prayers such as Marsha Falk's *Shabbat* blessings, which rely on gender-neutral language and evoke a sense of partnership with God, have been incorporated into services. Mishkan Shalom's religious school attempts to highlight the role of women in weekly discussions of the *Torah* portion: when women are absent from the portion, students are encouraged to imagine what their roles might have been.

Yet attempts to re-envision synagogue life based on the values and perspectives that women bring to Judaism have been met with greater resistance. Some Philadelphia Jewish feminists who have chosen not to affiliate with Mishkan Shalom believe this is inevitable, because the American synagogue was not created by women or with their best interests in mind. Others feel the existence of a two-decades-old, non-denominational, Jewish, feminist movement has shifted the American Jewish landscape, paving the way for feminism to alter synagogue life dramatically.

Mishkan Shalom's statement of principles calls for nothing less than the "feminist reconstruction of Judaism." When this language was first introduced, some members objected to its lack of specificity. To develop a common understanding of what a "feminist reconstruction of Judaism" actually implied, the synagogue has initiated an ambitious series of programs of Jewish feminism: an annual Jewish Feminist Scholar-in-Residence weekend which has hosted Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell and Dr. Judith Plaskow; adult education courses on Jewish feminism; and monthly meetings for women on different topics related to Jewish feminism, to name a few. Mishkan Shalom is still very new: it remains to be seen whether the synagogue can live by its own example, allowing itself to be transformed as an institution by the experiences of Jewish women.

Christie Balka is co-editor of Twice Blessed: On Being Lesbian, Gay and Jewish, *[Beacon Press, 1989].*

Long Walks and Intimate Talks

by Grace Paley

In the Foremother's Department, Grace Paley ranks right up there. For 60 years (she's now 68), she has written poetry, fiction and essays, and for almost as long she has marched in protests and worked to change women's lives through her teaching. Her novel Enormous Changes at the Last Minute *appeared in 1974, and* Later the Same Day *(1985),* Little Disturbances of Man *(1985), and* A Dream Compels Us: Voices of Salvadoran Women *(1989) followed. The following pieces are excerpted from* Long Walks and Intimate Talks, *a collection of short pieces illustrated by Vera Williams [Feminist Press, 1991]. Paley is now working on a collection of essays.*

"I'm sort of a continuous person," Paley said in a recent phone interview. "I've been a peace activist since childhood. The last seven years I've gotten reinvolved with Jewish concerns, with peace activism as a Jew and a woman, with the Israeli women's peace movement. Those women are so damn brave."

"I'm particularly concerned with women's issues. Women's lives seem worse now. And while I'm not an organizer, I worked on the first ecofeminist conference in 1979. I now mostly do local stuff in Vermont, where I live—meetings on choice, for instance."

"For me, working with people is a social habit."

Answers

A man came into my father's workplace about eighty years ago. He held a gun and asked my father to hand over the shop's money. He was my father's brother. My father said "Why don't you ask me at home?" He answered, "Because I want your boss' money not the family's."

My father was 21 or 22, my uncle about 19. My father told me this story once. Most family stories are told many times.

One day my cousin Lenny and I were talking about the family. I wondered if he knew more about our uncle who had been taken from home, arrested in the Palmer Red raids of the early 20's and deported within the year to Russia, probably Vladivostok.

My cousin's mother, my aunt the oldest sister took me aside and asked, "Why did you tell him this story? You don't even know what really happened. Let me tell you something. He was a wonderful boy our Grisha. You're so crazy about your father; but if you had known Grisha, with your crazy ideas you would have loved him much more. He was the one you would have loved."

Conversation

Faith had just returned from Puerto Rico. She had attended a conference on The Bilingual Child and Public Education. She was an active worker in the PTA and had been sent by the local school board.

The neighborhood newspaper, always longing for community news, wanted to interview her. The young reporter made a couple of remarks, then asked a general question. "Mrs. Asbury, I understand you talked with many people and visited schools and clinics as part of the work of this conference. What did you think of Puerto Rico?"

Luckily she had been forming and reforming some sentences on the plane. She was able to deliver them—awkward but whole. "I think: first, around 1900 we stole their language from the people. The U.S. commissioners decided the Puerto Ricans should be educated in English—just the way the French did with the Vietnamese. Then, around the time the schools and the children were freed finally into their native Spanish, our cities needed new cheap labor, and the people were stolen from their language. That's what I think."

"May I quote you?" he asked.

"Yes," said Faith, feeling like the great traveler. "Quote me."

In the evening, she persuaded her son Richard to accompany her. They visited her parents, who lived in the Home for the Golden Ages, an institution full of small apartments for the intact, and dormitories for those unable to care for themselves. She told her parents that she had been interviewed and would soon be quoted. Her mother went next door immediately to inform a neighbor.

"I hope you didn't make a fool of yourself," her father said nervously.

"She handles herself pretty well lately," said Richard. "Don't worry Grandpa. I worry sometimes myself," he said courteously. His grandfather looked at him and nearly fainted with love, "He looks wonderful, this boy," he said. "I like his hair long."

"I do too," said Faith's mother, returning with her friend Mrs. Harrison. "I told her you would be in the paper. She wanted to meet you."

"Oh Ma, it's just a little neighborhood paper."

"All right, my dream," her mother said. "You took a trip. You went to a different place. Tell us something."

"Well, okay." said Faith. "First, it's very beautiful. Very green and mountainous and you know, an island. They call it Daughter of the Sun and Sea. They can grow anything—oranges, bananas, beans, tomatoes, avocados—anything—people have chickens—but you know I went into a supermarket and *the eggs are all stamped U.S.A.!"*

Mrs. Harrison said, "They're poor people, I suppose. We send them eggs? It's wonderful. That's the good old U.S. of A. for you."

"Wonderful. . ." said Richard. "Wonderful? Don't you people understand anything?"

"What a temper!" said his grandfather, full of admiration. "What Richard means Mrs. Harrison: We don't *give* them. We *sell* them. They *got* to buy the eggs. They quit doing all that agriculture themselves."

"Sure, we even send them rice from California," said Faith, "—which they could also grow."

"They should do it if they can," said Mrs. Harrison. "But the tropics. . .people get very lackadaisical, I suppose."

"You suppose," said Richard. He stood up and looked at the door.

"Calm down," said Faith. "Let me explain it a little. You know, when I visited one if the junior highs, I went into the kitchen—first of all I must say the school was beautiful—on a hill, a campus really. In the kitchen, I met these women very familiar to me, Puerto Rican women, after all, I know them from the PTA. And it turned out that a few, more than a few, had been in the States, worked in New York, it was too hard. On Rivington Street as a matter of fact...."

"You're supposed to be explaining something," said Richard.

"I don't happen to have your machine-gun style, Richard, so just shut up! Where was I? The women. The women were school kitchen aides and they had these enormous bags of rice from California on the table and they were taking all sorts of little bugs and worms out of the rice."

"You see," said Richard, who couldn't keep quite another minute, "you see they not only squeeze the local people out with cheap U.S.A. prices but they send them junk. They do that all over. That's what it means to be a colony, you get junk. You're poor. You gotta take it. Junky rice, inflammable clothes, you *could* grow oranges but can't afford it. It comes cheaper from three thousand miles away even including the oil. You want to know a little fact. Little Puerto Rico was our fifth biggest market. A fact."

"He's right," said Faith, "it's not such a surprising idea—it happens right here. People are poor but they think they're rich. They own a houseful of plastic and tin."

"And who needs it?" asked Mrs. Harrison, who still refused to argue. "Garbage! But the president just said they could become a state."

"A state! What's so great about becoming a state? They already have the honor of having more dead and wounded guys from the last war, percentagewise. And look at Maine—they're giving all the shoe business to Korea. Maine's a colony, Vermont's a colony. A state! Big deal. Thank you U.S.A."

"He does have a wonderful temper," said Mrs. Harrison.

"*He* was once like that," said his grandmother, poking her husband in the ribs.

"And what about you? Once upon a time, *I* remember," he said smiling. "Once on the boardwalk, she socked a cop who grabbed our boy for some foolishness."

This finished everything for Richard. "He was *once* like that. You were *once*. No wonder the world's in this condition." "*Once!"* he shouted, and tore out of the apartment as though *"Once"* were catching, a contagious disease which might afflict his revolutionary limbs forever, and set the muscles of his face in an ineradicable smile.

(Another) Conversation

My husband's mother lived in Florida on the sandy shore of a small lake in the middle of an orange grove that looked something like a child's painting, based in the color of sand with an occasional spear of green green grass bending this way and that. She was dying and wanted to ask a couple of questions about life.We could speak to her only at lunch—briefly—and later at supper. She didn't eat much but it was the hour of her little strength and she offered it to us.

One evening at supper she asked me about Women's Lib. She and her best friend (also very sick) had been talking about it. She said she thought I might know something about it. What was it like? Did it mean there would be women lawyers?

Yes.

Would they work for women?

Oh surely, I said.

Would women get paid the same? Was that the idea?

One of them, I answered. Equal pay at least.

Would women be free of men bossing them around?

Hopefully, I said.

Though it might take the longest amount of time since it would involve lots of changes in men.

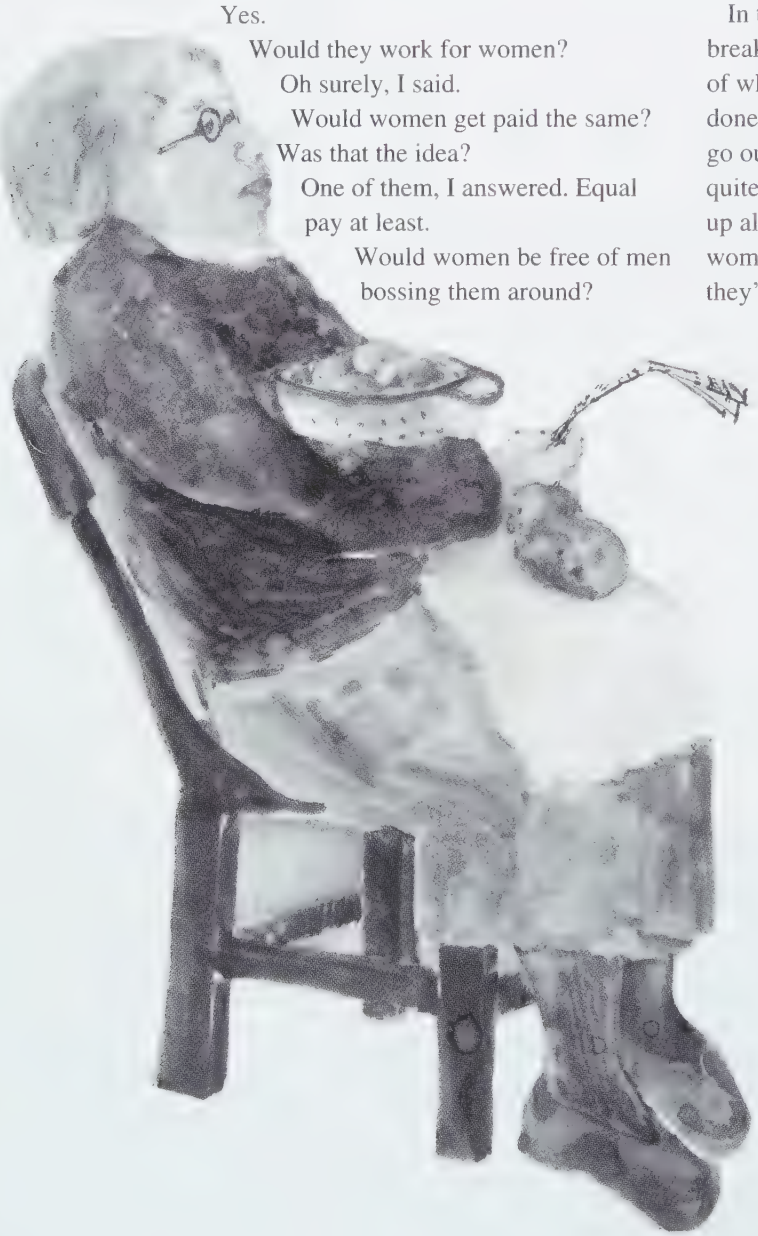
Oh they won't like that a bit, she said. Would people love their daughters then as much as their sons?

Maybe more, I said. Not fair again, she said slyly.

But that wasn't all, I said. Most of the Women's Libbers I knew really didn't want to have a piece of the men's pie. They thought that pie was kind of poisonous, toxic, really full of weapons, poison gases, all kinds of mean junk we didn't even want a slice of.

She was tired. That's a lot she said. Then she went upstairs to sleep.

In the morning she surprised us. She came down for breakfast. I couldn't sleep she said. I was up all night thinking of what you said.You know she said, there isn't a thing I've done in my life that I haven't done for some man. Dress up or go out or take a job or quit it or go home or leave. Or even be quite or say something nice, things like that. You know I was up all night thinking about you and especially those young women. I couldn't stop thinking about what wonderful lives they're going to have.



People in My Family

In my family
people who are 82 are very different
from people who are 92

The 82-year old people grew up
the year was 1914
This is what they knew World War I
War World War War
That's why when they speak to the grandchild
they say poor little one

The 92-year old people grew up
The year was 1905
They went to prison
They went into exile
They said ah soon
That's why when they speak to the grandchild
they say first there will be revolution
then there will be revolution then once more
then the earth itself will turn and turn
and cry out Oh I have been made sick
then you my little bud
will flower and save it.

From the book *Long Walks and Intimate Talks*. Text ©1991 by Grace Paley; artwork ©1991 by Vera Williams. Published by The Feminist Press at the City University of New York. All rights reserved.

LILITH

THE JEWISH WOMEN'S MAGAZINE

BACK ISSUES

WINTER 1987

How is Israel Changing Ethiopian Women? • Judaism and Divorce • Writings about love • Jewish Romance on TV

WINTER 1990

Feminist Jewish scholorship • Sexism in the Rosenberg and Pollard cases • AIDS education • Women's birth rituals

WINTER 1989

Radical Jewish Women's Activism • Women and Mid-East Peace • How the intifada empowers Palestinian women

FALL 1989

Jewish women politicians • Adult Bat-Mitzvah • A pictorial history of Jewish women's restrictive clothing.

SUMMER 1989

New Fiction from Israel • Mother/ daughter relationships • Coming out in the Jewish Family • Women at the Wall

SPRING 1991

Esther Singer Kreitman: I.B. Singer's "forgotten" sister • 12 Step Programs • Jewish Women artists • Gila Almagor

SPRING 1989

Jewish Families • Love and Jewish identity • Jewish woman's insider's guide to campus life • Women and the Israeli political agenda

SPRING 1990

A re-interpretation of the story of Dinah • Anxiety 101: leading the Passover seder • An Israeli Jew, a Catholic feminist and a nun write about Poland

WINTER 1985

Jewish Women Pioneers of the American West • The male monopoly of Jewish Community Leadership • Conservative Rabbi Amy Eilberg

Plus . . . Book Reviews • Fiction • Health • New Rituals • Food • Poetry • Listings you can't live without!

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

# of issues ____ @ 2 for $7 = _____

issues_____

Please make checks payable to Lilith Publications
LILITH • 250 West 57th Street
• Suite 2432 • NY • NY • 10107

WOMAN'S CAUSE: THE JEWISH WOMAN'S MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND AND THE UNITED STATES, 1881-1933

by Linda Gordon Kuzmack. Ohio State University Press, 1990, $16.95

What roles did British and American women play in transforming religious and secular life from 1881-1933—an era during which great changes took place in Great Britain and the United States for Jews, for the working class, and for women? Who were Rebecca Kohut, Lily Montagu, Ray Frank Litman, and Hannah F. Cohen?

The answers to these questions cannot be found in standard accounts describing Jewish life during this period—accounts that invariably focus on the "world of our fathers" rather than on the achievements of women. Linda Gordon Kuzmack's meticulously documented *Woman's Cause*, a welcome addition to the growing field of Jewish women's history, introduces us to the extraordinary Jewish women whose lives have been virtually invisible in the conventional histories.

In her introduction, Kuzmack, Director of the Oral History Department of the United States Holocaust Museum, asserts that "Jewish feminists participated in the national English and American feminist movements during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to a greater degree than is commonly recognized." At the same time, they also created "a feminist movement that was distinctively Jewish."

Beginning in 1881, when there was a great influx of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe to England and the United States, Kuzmack discusses such female pioneers in English philanthropy and education as Judith Lady Montefiore and Louise Lady Rothschild, as well as Rebecca Gratz, founder of the Sunday School movement in America. Under Gratz's leadership, these schools began to hire women as teachers and taught not only boys but girls, practices without precedent in the Jewish community. Subsequent chapters provide brief biographical sketches of women who played important roles in all aspects of Jewish life: seeking ways to enhance the status of women in the synagogue; founding Jewish women's clubs, such as the National Council of Jewish Women in the United States and its British counterpart, the Union of Jewish Women; establishing social service organizations to help the indigent and combat the growing problem of white slavery among poor immigrant women; acting for trade unionism; and participating in the suffrage movement.

As this study reveals, the more active Jewish women became within their own Jewish communities, the more they formed alliances with Christian women in the secular society concerning such issues as protective legislation for women and children, trade unionism, and suffrage. According to Kuzmack, the precedent of secular feminism, in turn, "encouraged Jewish women to emerge from the home and the constraints of their traditional role in the Jewish community." Many of the Jewish women who were schooled as reformers in the secular arena also began to serve as advocates for changes in Jewish ritual observances that would guarantee a more equitable role for Jewish women in the synagogue and in religious practices.

In Jewish Women In Historical Perspective, a recently published collection of essays about Jewish women from biblical times to the present, editor Judith R. Baskin observes, "While women were rarely a part of the events and cultural accomplishments that have been valued and taught in the Western tradition, investigation can sometimes reveal a contemporaneous and alternative women's history and culture." Kuzmack's book, based on oral history, archival materials, Jewish as well as secular newspapers and periodicals, and earlier historical accounts, does indeed reveal an "alternative women's history and culture." *Woman's Cause* is an important addition to women's history, in general, and Jewish women's history, in particular.

—Charlotte Goodman

YOUR PEOPLE, MY PEOPLE

by Lena Romanoff. JPS, 1990, $22.95

Lena Romanoff's new guide to conversion makes personable politics out of the issues of conversion. Personable, in that its approach is anecdotal and friendly. Political, because rather than treating conversion as an isolated, individual decision, it focuses on creating communities and relationships that are helpful to converts.

In every chapter, the author's underlying principle is respect for diversity. Romanoff makes suggestions to converts, their spouses and partners, rabbis and communities, that are aimed at an enlargement of the possibilities for choice and growth. She presents, without judgment, the frustration converts and their families encounter as they strive for mutual acceptance.

Guidelines for conversion from the major movements are included, but Romanoff carefully acknowledges that, "[the] important thing to remember is that each convert must seek his or her own Jewish identity through individual methods, not through the methods or opinions of others."

Said one convert: "My New York Jewish family was elated when I agreed to convert, but I'm not sure they realized what would not happen: I did not lose my southern drawl; my eyes and hair are still light; I read Hebrew like an elementary school child; and just as I didn't care for Chinese food before I converted, I still don't care for Chinese food—Kosher or not."

Romanoff notes the struggle with history and politics entailed in every conversion, as well as issues arising from a redefinition of personal identity within families and local communities.

One woman describes the pain of learning about the Holocaust: "I found myself crying not for those who perished in the ravages of the concentration camps but for myself—my past ignorance and lack of empathy."

In a chapter devoted specifically to the "double jeopardy" of Black converts, Romanoff interviews both Black/white

couples who have made their homes in largely white, Jewish communities, and those who chose to live in Black, non-Jewish communities.

In the chapter about gay and lesbian converts Romanoff's consistently accepting stance falters. She makes a point of stating, twice, her own discomfort with gay and lesbian sexuality, which calls into question her inclusion of testimony from gays and lesbians who've reconciled sexual identity with a desire to live halachically by opting for celibacy.

Viewed in the best possible light, she is bravely using herself as an example of someone who, knowing her own limitations, has made the conscious effort to separate her distaste for homosexuality from her feelings about who is or is not a Jew. That could have been done, however, without the added affirmation of homophobia conferred by the author's rather gratuitous inclusion of her own.

— Judith Chalmer

WITH THE SNOW QUEEN

by Joanne Greenberg. Arcade Publishing, 1991, $19.95

Joanne Greenberg's latest collection of short stories, *With the Snow Queen,* is as welcome as a Chanel classic. For a quarter of a century, Greenberg has produced a body of short stories and novels that are original and moving. Few who read *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* (published under the pseudonym, Hannah Green), will ever forget it. Though her prose is spare and leaves little to be inferred, Greenberg's writing always rings true. It always poses a moral dilemma, and it rarely settles for the easy answer.

The fourteen stories in *With the Snow Queen* are enormously varied in setting, tone and point-of-view. Greenberg is as comfortable working with male characters as with female; characters vary from a Christian monk in a secluded monastery, to a Jewish Ph.D. in Colorado (Greenberg's home and the site of several of these tales). Though Greenberg grounds her largest themes in the most mundane and realistic detail, make no mistake about it: these enormously readable stories are parables designed to teach as well as entertain.

In the title story, Sema, the protagonist living in some far future age, begs to travel backwards in time to re-live parts of her life. Hers was a life that had been "reasonable," and she now finds herself unfulfilled. Like others of her time, Sema had been taught to do what was expected, never to "disturb the universe." But this life without conflict leaves her numb, the kind of woman who, upon learning of a terrible plague, simply, "low-fatted another piece of barley toast without a sigh." She goes back in time to the days before her marriage, a visit that would have surprising and disturbing consequences.

"Offering Up" is an imaginative story told in the first person by a monk living in a remote monastery. This monk, along with two fellow brothers, is addicted to a fictitious drug called Limbate, a substance that "doesn't change the moral or ethical sense; it only stills the voices of recrimination for thoughts and acts already done." We are told of the irony of living in a community where the inhabitants hope to reach God, but are never able to escape from the pressures of their brothers. So successful is Greenberg in evoking this exotic world and the dilemma of these three inhabitants that we find ourselves almost unable to turn the pages for fear of the outcome.

"Stand Still, Ute River" is one of the most successful stories of the entire col-

From **WOMEN'S GLIB: A COLLECTION OF WOMEN'S HUMOR**, *edited by Rosalind Warren. Crossing Press, 1991.* Cartoon by Marian Henley

It's Cece, Maxine! Her husband's on the blink!
Tell her we'll be right over!
What seems to be the problem?
Maxine's Fix-A-Guy Service
Well, everything was fine until after the wedding!
Then KABLOOEY! He turned into a JERK!
Oh, be quiet and fix me a sandwich!
We see this problem all the time!
He's driving me CRAZY!
Hmm!
PINK PINK!
MEOW!
Oh, be quiet and fix me a sandwich!
It's an internal malfunction! Not worth repairing!
I suggest you replace the whole unit!
Oh, be quiet and fix me a sandwich!
?
We have a new spring line for you to choose from!
YIPPEE!
Your eyes are like STARS!
Shall we drown in champagne?
Oh, be quiet and fix me a sandwich!

plague whose effects are "profound depression, sleeplessness, weeping and lethargy." The way in which Greenberg connects this "plague" to the ancient Jewish ceremony of Tashlich, the symbolic casting away of sin into the water, makes this both an ingenious and ultimately comic story.

As I devoured Greenberg's latest collection, I found myself marvelling at her versatility. She never seems to tell the same story twice, as so many authors do. Though many of these tales have common concerns (the effects of memory, for example), each contains its own milieu, rounded characters, and, in most cases, satisfactory resolution. Occasionally, an ending seems contrived, the result of the exigencies of following out the parable's lesson. Greenberg's didacticism is subtle. She is an artist whose stories move and entertain. If you are new to Greenberg, you'll be visiting the "G" shelves of your public library as soon as you have enjoyed *With the Snow Queen.* If you are already a fan, you will savor another wonderful visit with an old friend.

— Faye Moskowitz

CHICKEN MAN

by Michelle Edwards. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1991, $13.95, ages 5-8

Just when you might have despaired of socialist utopian communities, here comes a book to give you pause and make you smile.

Chicken Man, like all fine children's books, tells a deceptively simple story. Chicken Man is a kibbutznik who sings while he works and loves his job so much that his friends each in turn think they want to be assigned to the job he is doing. Of course, Chicken Man's pleasure in his work has most of all endeared him to the chickens who in the end effectively communicate to the kibbutz work committee that they need Chicken Man on a permanent basis.

The warmly colored, primitive-style painted illustrations by the author are brimming with familiar details of kibbutz life, from the special kind of window blinds that keep out the strong Mediterranean sunlight, to the sandals, hats, shorts and bedspreads in the children's house.

This book uses the idealized kibbutz setting to help child readers explore a basic problem: How can people be happy at their work while at the same time making sure that all necessary nasty jobs get done? It tells us that a human community—who knows? perhaps even a family—might be able to be resilient, flexible and creative enough to achieve both these goals. What a pleasure to be treated to this delightful and meaningful story in the context of kibbutz life. It is, after all, in these communities of pioneering Israeli social experiment that humans have, with particular courage, sought to meet the universal challenge of matching work and workers.

—Naomi Danis

2 VIDEOS ON ISRAEL:

WOMEN'S PEACE *by Shuli Eshel*

(30 minutes)

If Shuli Eshel's latest documentary did not exist, I would want the Jewish community to commission it. And if I had my way, the video would be screened not just by every Jewish women's organization but by the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish organizations, the Congress of the United States, and every Middle East think tank in Washington.

Women's Peace, which Eshel wrote, produced, and directed, is a rivetting 30-minute cram course on the complex political history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its impact on women's lives, reported from the perspective of women themselves. There is nothing quite as revelatory as seeing, for a change, the visual images a woman deems important—a Gaza Palestinian woman who has just given birth commenting on what the future holds for her baby, and a Jewish newlywed couple speaking to the same issue; a peace demonstration representing all classes, cultures and nationalisms; children playing war games; women holding life together at home while men conduct their bloody confrontations from the War of Independence to the intifada.

But even more affecting than these images are the interviews with the brave, visionary women who are engaged in the day-to-day struggle to bring about Jewish-Arab co-existence.

Whether in Jerusalem, the Occupied Territories, or the Upper West Side of Manhattan, the activists portrayed in this film are working on four levels: *educational* (sponsoring parlor meetings, conferences and dialogue groups); *symbolic or consciousness-raising* (holding vigils such as those initiated by Women in Black in Israel, or the Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation in the United States); *political* (organizing support for the pro-peace position within Israel's party structures); and *human rights* (monitoring Israeli government censorship or the military's treatment of political prisoners).

In the process of documenting these efforts, the filmmaker showcases some of the most powerful and inspiring females on the political scene today. Israeli Jews interviewed on camera include women who work within the system, including Shulamit Aloni, Member of Knesset representing Ratz, (the dovish Civil Rights Movement party); Yael Dayan, writer and Labor Party leader; Masha Lubelsky, head of Na'amat, (Israel's largest women's organization); and Anat Hoffman, a "young Turk" member of the Jerusalem City Council who describes herself as a feminist, a political progressive, and a "religiously observant Reform Jew."

Wisely, Shuli Eshel gives equal time to women who work outside the system at the grassroots—for instance, Leah Shakdiel and Debbie Goldman-Golan, who call themselves religious peace activists; Gila Svirsky, former director of the New Israel Fund and a founder of Women in Black; Naomi Chazan, a political scientist, Peace Now organizer, and co-convener of the Reshet, a coalition of women's peace groups; Alice Shalvi, the Orthodox Jewish feminist who is chair of the Israel Women's Network; and Maya Bailen, a mother of two sons now serving in the IDF, and a

member of Israeli Parents Against Moral Erosion.

The Palestinian voices are also varied and impressive. They range from Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi, Dean of the Humanities at Beir Zeit University (known for her meetings with American Secretary of State James Baker), to Rana Nashashibi, a leader of the Union of Palestinian Women Workers, to Mary Khass, a child care professional who is a prominent spokeswoman for both feminism and Palestinian nationalism, to Amal Labadi, the wife of a Palestinian deportee.

The American women interviewed in the film, although not as numerous or diverse, nevertheless serve to illustrate the range of activities women have organized in the United States in support of a negotiated settlement between Israel and the Palestinian people.

If you have ever wished you could spend time in the Middle East getting to know courageous women and sharing in their struggle for peace and social justice, or if you' want an instant Baedeker to the women's peace movement in this country, *Women's Peace* can save you a lot of time and trouble. And as a bonus, this informative film is also well-crafted—dramatic, yet emotionally authentic, persuasive but intellectually rigorous. In short, just what one might expect from Shuli Eshel, who gave us the unforgettable *To Be a Woman Soldier*, the documentary that exposed the myth about equal treatment of the sexes in the Israeli Defense Forces. *For more information contact Eshel at 3600 N. Lake Shore Drive, (apt. 1205) Chicago, IL 60613. (312) 868-4140.*

— Letty Cottin Pogrebin

A SEARCH FOR SOLID GROUND: THE INTIFADA THROUGH ISRAELI EYES

(33 minutes)

In the eyes of the Anti-Defamation League, something had to be done. The Intifada has gone on for three and a half years, and all this time, in the view of the A.D.L., Western media's representations of the Palestinian uprising have been "...generally simplistic, one-sided, and replete with false and misleading analogies."

The response designed by the A.D.L., in association with Hadassah, takes the form of a 30-minute video. There are no P.L.O. spokespeople to be seen here, and the only Arab voices heard are those of the shouting or mourning protesters who populate the film's news clips. Both the film and the accompanying study guide open with this statement of purpose: this film does not attempt to treat both sides of the conflict. Instead, the focus is entirely on what the Intifada means to the average Israeli.

From its first moment, the film is honest and disquieting (despite a few initial moments of inappropriate soundtrack). We hear the voices of soldiers who must fight in the territories; we witness the frustrations of Israeli Jews whose homes border on Arab communities. The film offers no obvious answers, but rather a much-needed presentation of the conundrum with which the average Israeli is presented.

One of the video's particular strengths is that it is appropriate for both those with a good understanding of Israeli history as well as those who know nothing beyond what they have seen on the news. Historical context is presented where appropriate, and the film, without imposing a history lecture, succeeds in capturing something essential about Israeli society in a short time. A study guide supplied with the video, complete with more detailed history and suggested questions for discussion, is also helpful,. although slightly more guided and dogmatic than the film.

A Search for Solid Ground is a hard look at the realities of daily life in Israel, with opinions ranging from moderate right to moderate left. It is notable that, as in so many representations of Judaism and of Israel, women's voices are scarcely heard; the film's main spokespeople are soldiers, fathers of soldiers, male military strategists, and a man living on the border of an Arab neighborhood. In the entire film, perhaps two women are interviewed, and we have little basis for judging whether the A.D.L.'s portrayal of the "average Israeli" is applicable to Israeli women as well.

A Search for Solid Ground is exactly that. If you are looking for a resounding confirmation of one or another opinion on the Intifada, you will be disappointed. If you are looking for an honest and provocative look at what is going on in Israel, you won't be disappointed.

. *To order, contact the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017 (212) 490-2525.*

—Rachel Kadish

Judith Chalmer lives and teaches creative writing in Montpelier, VT. Charlotte Goodman teaches at Skidmore College. Faye Moskowitz's latest book is And the Bridge is Love *(Beacon, 1991). Letty Cottin Pogrebin's latest book is* Deborah, Golda, and Me *(Crown, 1991).*

FUNNY WOMAN

The Life and Times of Fanny Brice

By Barbara W. Grossman

A Selection of the Jewish Book Club

". . .vibrant . . . informed and informative . . . Fresh and colorful, with a special emphasis on Brice's comedic material and technique, this admirable biography will entertain readers as it fills in the gaps in their knowledge of Brice's life and, yes, her times, too." — ***Booklist***

"Brice . . . is portrayed in Grossman's entertaining, scrupulously documented study as an indefatigably versatile comedienne . . ." — ***Publishers Weekly***

". . . definitive work . . ." — ***Library Journal***

cloth $35.00

FUNNY WOMAN is available at bookstores or from

INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS

Dept. A2QF • Bloomington, IN 47405 • 1-800-842-6796

CORNSTALKS, CONCH SHELLS & MY JEWISH PROBLEM

by Mary Gendler

Kathy Sillman

Surrounded by lush foliage, chattering monkeys, huge banyan trees and ancient mossy temples, my husband I began reciting the traditional prayers of Kol Nidre. Our chants and prayers in Hebrew mingled easily with the sounds of the monkey forest in Ubud, Bali, where we found ourselves for Yom Kippur in 1987.

Although we were halfway around the world with no other Jews in sight, I felt we were in a kindred soul space. Bali is alive with neshama [soul]. It feels as if spirits sparkle and hover in every tree and flower. Religion and nature are closely intertwined.

Back in the United States—the land of Big Mac, hard rock, Wonder bread and crack—I wondered what I could do to preserve some of the spiritual magic I had experienced in Bali, how I could integrate this wholistic approach into my Jewish practices.

Most Jewish holidays were originally celebrations based on the natural cycles of the year. Like other peoples long ago, Jews lived close to nature and had an appropriate awe and reverence for her. We knew her by various names: Ashtoreth, Ashera, Ishtar, Adama...the Great Mother, the Great Goddess. In their zeal to smash idol worship, our forefathers crushed the reverencing of Ashera, and with her destruction, the respect of nature began to disappear. Religion went to our heads, became encased in bound volumes, was endlessly debated by bearded male scholars in dark, dusty rooms.

Along with Ashera, we were severed from the earth, cut off from our connection with the feminine aspects of life. It is, I believe, through feeling our kinship with the earth and its creatures, experiencing (rather than mastering and controlling) the awesome majesty of the Universe, that we begin to feel the magic that is both within us and without. Judaism can be a vehicle for this discovery if we allow ourselves to connect with its ancient rhythms and meanings.

Sukkot, for example, is an unabashed nature festival. The sukkah, decorated with fruits and flowers, is a reminder of the ancient harvest season when families slept and ate in rough booths in the fields. Our sukkah is made with corn stalks, produce and greenery from our own woods and gardens.

If you're an urban dweller without a sukkah, perhaps a sacred space can be created inside your home. I don't yet invite the spirits of the harvest to join me, but perhaps I should, in the same way that one fills Elijah's cup. An offering to Adamah (our sweet mother without whose bounty we could not exist)—a basket of fruit, some flowers—would feel appropriate.

I have long been aware of the importance of integrating my life with the cycles of nature. My husband and I live on five acres of land, and for twenty years we have grown much of our food organically. This close interaction with the earth has led us to search out ways to bring this awareness into our practice of Judaism.

For the last 18 years, on the second day of Rosh Hashanah, a small group of us has gathered on a local beach to celebrate the birthday of the world. Arriving before sunrise, we watch the changing colors of the sky, and as the top of the sun pierces the horizon, we honor the moment with a cacophony of sound—shofars, conch shells, Tibetan horns, drums, song. Then we settle on our blankets and share readings, prayers and personal reflections about what has moved us during the past year. There is no prescribed order, no designated leader. Always there is a heightened sense of being at one with the universe as the crash of the waves and the cries of the gulls mingle with our songs and prayers in the early morning mist.

On Yom Kippur I have found that spending a few hours out-of-doors can encourage a valuable meditative experience. A spiritual and reflective diary which I write while sitting in a favorite spot helps me to connect my inner self with a sense of the larger world, while

providing a record of my journey over the years.

Chanukah, the festival of light, was initially a midwinter nature festival when the spirits of darkness were chased away by giant bonfires at the black time of the year. Light dispelling darkness—it is this mystery which stirred our foreparents, and it still has the power to move us if we but give it space to do so.

Mostly I shield myself from the anxiety of darkness in winter by staying in a house which is illuminated with hundreds of watts of artificial light. But when I step outside in late December and truly allow myself to experience the deep darkness already evident by late afternoon, I allow myself to feel some of the mystery.

To connect this to Jewish ritual practice, we light our Chanukah candles outside. We try to find a piece of driftwood or a large root from an old tree and we fashion a menorah. If you're in a group, each person can hold a stick topped by an individual candle.

Passover—the holiday of freedom, of exile and redemption. In New England where I live, Pesach comes just as the first crocuses force their way through the frigid earth, as the forsythia bursts into brilliant yellow, as the first chives bravely assert their survival of the frozen winter, and as the horseradish declares itself ready to be harvested for the seder plate. We bring all of these living things to the table as a living sign of rebirth and promise.

The world is filled with magic, with spirit, with holiness and wonder, and the Jewish tradition is rich in potential. For too long, however, we have let ourselves be led down the path of history and reason, experiencing the holy only as words, not as the glittering array of energy and forms which dance and shimmer about us here just as surely as in the monkey forests in Bali.

It is time to reassert our connection to Adamah [Earth], to reverence (not worship) the spirit of Ashera (the Great Mother), to reclaim and rejoice in the ancient wisdom and potential of our tradition.

Mary Gendler co-directs the Jewish Family Service in the Merrimack Valley, MA.

KOL ISHAH

continued from page 3

Proffering a ritual response to miscarriage that was similar to that of mourning a death, it challenged Judaism unintentionally with the loss of its careful "distinction between a fetus and a person, which holds that 'personhood' comes only with birth." Obliterating this distinction might have affected Judaism's relatively tolerant attitude toward abortion.

Stephanie Dickstein's paper on mourning for neonatal loss (stillbirth) is still in committee.

—Susan Schnur

STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

First Webster, then Louisiana's new anti-choice legislation, and now the "Gag Rule," approved by the Supreme Court on May 23.

For the pro-choice American, things have gone from bad to repressive to simply frightening. The Court's decision this spring in Rust v. Sullivan, known as the "Gag Rule" because of its stifling effect on the power of physicians to inform pregnant women of all their alternatives, mandates that physicians in clinics with federal funding be forbidden to mention the option of abortion to a pregnant woman coming in for treatment—even in a case in which carrying a baby to term may endanger the woman's life, even in a case of rape or incest, even a case in which a poor or uninformed woman may risk her life with a back-alley abortion.

The Court's ruling, if enacted, will require further that when a pregnant woman asks any medical professional about the option of abortion, the doctor respond by telling her that "abortion is not an appropriate method of family planning." In a statement that is, to civil libertarians, rife with Orwellian implications, Chief Justice Rehnquist defended the restriction placed on the speech of doctors, saying that the Supreme Court decision does not "significantly impinge on the doctor-patient relationship," because patients who go to clinics should not expect "comprehensive medical advice."

As the American Jewish Committee points out in an outraged response to the recent ruling, the new law not only restricts what a doctor can say, but may compel her/him to make a statement about abortion in which s/he does not believe.

Despite the U.S. court system's general move to the right on the question of choice since the Webster ruling two years ago (July 3, 1989), the Court's decision in Rust v. Sullivan has come as a shock to many. Feminist and pro-choice groups, long in the trenches on this issue, have organized emergency letter-writing campaigns; LILITH has also gotten word of calls to action by such Jewish organizations as the United Synagogue of America, the American Jewish Committee, Na'Amat USA, B'nai B'rith Women, Hadassah, the New Jewish Agenda, and the National Council of Jewish Women. The Gag Rule seems to have touched a nerve in the First-Amendment consciousness of many Americans, and groups that had never before identified themselves as pro-choice have begun speaking out against the Court's decision.

It is hoped that the combined voices of these groups will be enough to reverse this ruling before clinics whose workers refuse to comply begin closing, for lack of federal funding.

—Rachel Kadish

Jewish Ceremonial objects in Clay

Yetzirah
POTTERY

Lia Lynn Rosen
4524 9th Street, NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107
(505) 345-4797

Custom Orders
Send for brochure

WATCH

Saying Kaddish written by Debbie Goodstein and Nessa Rapoport, portrays a Jewish family and community affirming life in the face of death. The 58-minute color videotape is $29.95 plus S/H, and NYC sales tax where applicable, from *Dep't. of Radio and Television/ Jewish Theological Seminary/3080 Broadway/NY, NY 10027.*

PARTICIPATE

For a twentieth century **anthology on Lilith, the first woman,**, to be published by the Jewish Women's Resource Center, National Council of Jewish Women, NY Section,to be edited by Enid Dame, Naomi Goodman, Lilly Rivlin and Henny Wenkart, please send poetry and short prose, published or unpublished, by women. Submit by December 15, enclosing SASE to *Henny Wenkart/ JWRC/9 E. 69th St./NY, NY 10021.*

For a conference on **Reassessing the Grounds for our Struggle: Connecting Women's Lives in Theory, Practice and Performance** to be held April 24-25, 1992, submit proposals for papers, panels, workshops, literary readings, performance artists, presentation of community projects. Contact: *Karen Gould, Director, or Lynn Walkiewicz, Conference Coordinator/Women's Studies Program /Bowling Green State University /248 Shatzel Hall/Bowling Green, OH 43403.*

For an anthology **Childless by Choice: a Multi-Cultural Anthology**, submit fiction, essays, narrative, poems, letters, cartoons, graphics, or photos. Contributions should be typed and not exceed twenty pages and include SASE by December 1, 1991. *HerBooks/ POB 7467/Santa Cruz, CA 95061.*

Divorced or separated fathers who have custody of their children: join a research project assessing the meaning of the father's role as the primary parent. Anonymity and confidentiality assured. *Dorcas D. Bowles, and Howard V. Epstein/ Dep't. of Social Work/ Georgia State University/ POB 4018/ Atlanta,GA 30302-4018.*

Were you Greek? Memoirs, letters, clippings, documents and photographs as well as subjects for interviews illuminating **National Jewish Greek-Letter Fraternities and Sororities from 1895 to the Present** are sought for a dissertation/book by *Marianne Sanua/c/o Department of History/ Fayerweather Hall/ Colombia University/NY, NY 10027.*

People who know about the persecution and murder of civilians in the **Joniskis district of Lithuania in the summer of 1941** are needed as witnesses for the U.S. Dep't of Justice Office of Special Investigations. Contact: *Elliot Welles/Director, ADL Nazi War Criminals Task Force/823 UN Plaza/NY, NY 10017 or Kenneth L. Misrok/Trial Attorney/Office of Special Investigations/ Criminal Division/U.S. Dep't of Justice/10th and Pennsylvania Ave.,NW/ Washington, DC 20530/Attn: Universal South, Room 1025.*

APPRECIATE

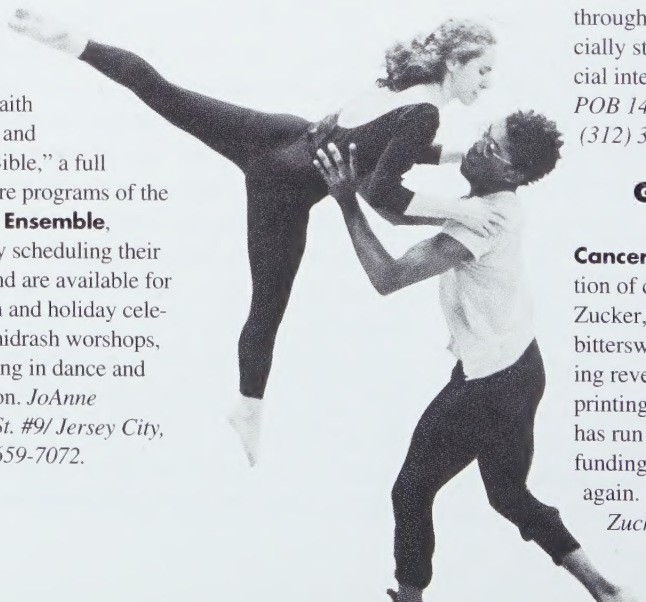
"Let My People Go," a dance/theater piece exploring common concerns of the Black & Jewish communities; "Stepping into Prayer," an interfaith dance workshop; and "Women in the Bible," a full length concert , are programs of the **Avodah Dance Ensemble**, which is currently scheduling their coming season and are available for concerts, Sabbath and holiday celebrations, dance midrash worshops, and teacher training in dance and religious education. *JoAnne Tucker/ 243 5th St. #9/ Jersey City, NJ 07302/(201) 659-7072.*

CONNECT

The **Israel Women's Network** is a coalition whose members represent a wide range of political opinion and religious outlook, but nevertheless work together to carry out programs and advocacy for the improvement of women's status in Israel. You can receive NETWORKING FOR WOMEN their quarterly publication, by sending $25.00 to *IWN/POB 3171/91031 Jerusalem, Israel.* You can also support their work through tax-exempt, earmarked IWN, send to to *The New Israel Fund/111 W. 40th St./ NY, NY 10018.*

Rabbi Mordechai Scharf, a former pulpit rabbi from Brooklyn, together with his wife Shoshana, and son Reuven, run a Jewish matchmaking service that specializes in **finding mates for mentally or physically disabled individuals**. They are looking to expand services worldwide, and follow up successful clients with support groups to help make the marriages work. They hope in the future to open a facility where disabled couples could live. Contact: *Maayan L'Ncheh/8 Eliash St., #20/ Jerusalem, Israel.*

A 24-page **coloring book designed to help children learn religious tolerance** and to correct misconceptions about Jews and Judaism was prepared for use by clergy and professional educators in both Jewish and non-Jewish religious school classrooms. $5.00 plus $1.50 shipping from *UAHC/ Dep't. of Religious Educa-tion/ 838 Fifth Ave./NY, NY 10021.*



Coming from the Jewish Education Service of North America are **Jewish holiday kits in Russian** that include several audio and video tapes, comprehensive information booklets, song books, posters, children's books, and stories and activities for children and families. Originally developed for the Joint Distribution Committee for use in Eastern Europe and the USSR, by the Melitz Centers for Jewish-Zionist Education in Israel, the kits are now available for $280.00 each. Local bureaus of Jewish education, Jewish community centers and schools are free to duplicate and distribute the materials. Contact: *David Shriner-Cahn/ JESNA/730 Broadway/ NY, NY 10003.*

V.O.I.C.E.S. [**Victims of Incest Can Emerge Survivors**] in Action is a resource and referral service for survivors of incest. They premote national and regional conferences for survivors and fo pro-survivors, those who love and care for survivors. Survivors also share common experiences , communicate and support one another through the mail. There is an especially strong Jewish women's special interest group.*V.O.I.C.E.S./ POB 148309/ Chicago,Il, 60614/ (312) 327-1500 M-F, 9 -5.*

GIVE TZEDAKA

Cancer with a Smile is a collection of cartoons by the late Doris Zucker, chronicling her illness with bittersweet humor and an underlying reverence for life. A private printing distributed by the family has run out, and they are seeking funding to make the book available again. Contact *Scott I. Zucker/1098 Citadel Drive/*

Atlanta, GA 30324.

A Chinese scholar who worked at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, is eager to spur **interest in Judaism in China** and is seeking funds to subsidize the publication of a Chinese version of the Encyclopedia Judaica. For a $100 contribution you will receive a copy with your name inscribed in both English and Chinese. *Professor Xu Xin/ English Dep't./Nanjing University/ Nanjing/People's Republic of China.*

The **Klezmer America Foundation** wants to create more practitioners of klezmer music, traditional Jewish Eastern European instrumental folk music, by promoting klezmer to the general population of the United States. Grants are available for community residencies, research, new works, recording and production assistance as well as a newsletter. Donations are welcome. *KAF/3341 Hyde Park/Cleveland, OH 44118.*

BE THERE

The **International Jewish-Feminist Directory** lists names, addresses, phone numbers, occupations, interests and organizational affiliations of hundreds of Jewish women worldwide. $5.00 from *The Commission for Women's Equality/ American Jewish Congress/15 E. 84th St./ NY, NY 10028.* Contact them also to have yourself added to subsequent editions.

Just released was the fifth edition of *100 Havens for Creatives* -a directory for people who are looking for a **break away from home and business** to work on their projects in an alternative vacation setting in the USA or abroad. Send $5 to *ACTS Institute, Inc./ POB 10153/Kansas City, MO 64111.*

The 1992 **March of the Living** will take place April 26-May 10. More than 1200 Jewish high school students from the US are expected to join 5,000 of their peers from throughout the world for an intense journey through Jewish history in Poland and Israel. Applications, information and videotapes are available from *March of the Living/ 4200 Biscayne Blvd./Miami FL 33137.*

Eat kosher across the continent with the help of a pocket-sized book, the Guide to Kosher Eating and Accommodation in North America, and help support the National Havurah Committee at the same time. Mail checks for $8.00/ copy, payable to the NHC, to *NightinGale Resources/Box 322/ Cold Spring, NY 10516.*

A telephone hotline at the University Student Department of the American Zionist Youth Foundation provides information about **Academic and year round and summer programs** and pro-Israel events you can implement on your campus. *1-800-27-ISRAEL.*

BODY/ POLITIC

How to break the cycle of domestic violence? Who are typical victims and batterers? Why do women stay in violent homes? **Facts about Domestic Violence**, is a brochure which is part of a campaign to heighten awareness of domestic violence and help the women and children who are its victims. Send $1.00 and a SASE to: *B'nai B'rith Women Central Services/1828 L St., NW #250/Washington, DC 20036.*

A training program for counselors works to breakdown barriers that prevent college students who were **sexually abused as children** from receiving helpful counseling. A videotape and manual familiarize counselors with the subject and alerts them to the signs of possible childhood sexual abuse. Information:*Cindy L. Kurland/Office of University Information/ Newark, Dep't.19716/(302) 451-2791.*

G.E.T. [**Getting Equitable Treatment**] was founded in 1979 in response to a growing need to assist individuals seeking a Jewish divorce from a recalcitrant spouse. In addition to the free and confidential service they sponsor educational programs and work to encourage community wide co-operation in these matters. *GET/Box 131/1012 Ave. I/ Brooklyn, NY 11230/(718) 871-3407.*

Learn how you can organize an events such as information tables, vigils, rallies, healing services and long-term campaigns to **stop violence against women**.Originally geared for use on college campuses, the Organizer's Packet, $5, has been adapted by many community groups. From *Fellowship of Reconciliation/Box 271/ Nyack, NY 10960.*

LEARN

Choosing Child Care, a booklet for parents, covers a variety of aspects of child care- from financing, to arranging a back-up arrangement if a child is sick. Lists of questions help break down complex decisions into several manageable parts. For a free copy write to *Aetna Life & Casualty/151 Farmington Ave./ RWAC/Hartford, CT. 06156.*

Case study scenarios, traditional Jewish texts, and present day Orthodox, Conservative and Reform interpretations illuminate the judgments young Jewish adults make about alcohol and drug abuse, premarital sex, intermarriage, and relationships with parents, in **Drugs, Sex, and Integrity**, a 71-page manual. $10.00 from *UAHC Press/ 838 5th Ave./ NY, NY 10021.*

AIDS : A Jewish Response is a videotape/pamphlet combination that presents facts about AIDS and the Jewish community's response—what it has been until now, and what it ought to be. Developed by the Conservative Movement for rabbis and spiritual leaders it is available from *The Association of Conservative Conregations/15 Fifth Ave./NY, N.Y. 10010-680 (212) 533-7800.*

What you should know about women and depression includes the the risk factors for depression , signs and symptoms , treatment and therapy issues, and the impact of gender roles, ethnic and socio-economic factors. Based on a three year study on women and depression,. this 4-page pamphlet is free with SASE from *American Psycho-logical Assn./Public Affairs/1200 17th St., NW/ Washington, DC 20036.*

RED YIDDISH

"Practical Health Information Every Woman Should Know" is an English and **Yiddish guide to breast self-examination**, which was produced as a result of a breast cancer education project in the Hasidic communities in Brooklyn. *The Brooklyn Area Office of the American Cancer Society/185 Montague St./ Brooklyn, NY 11201/ 1-800-ACS-2345.*

Sing in Yiddish in New York with the Jewish People's Philharmonic directed by Peter Schlosser. This group meets weekly at the McBurney Y at *215 West 23 St./(212)619-4099* and performs four times a year. Another Yiddish song group, this one from the Workman's Circle, sings for fun and meets on Sundays at the *Educational Alliance West/21 E.13 St./ Stephen Dowling/(212) 889-6800 x284*

Di Dray Bern, otherwise known as **The Three Bears in Yiddish**, is now available as a bilingual book with transliteration. This 64-page illustrated book can also be accompanied by an audio cassette featuring the original music of Paul Frank and the voice of Maurice Levinsohn as the "Zeyde." Call or write to *Jewish Educational Workshop/ 2209 Greenery Lane/Silver Spring, MD 20906/(301) 933-3520.*

—compiled by Naomi Danis and Kathy Sillman

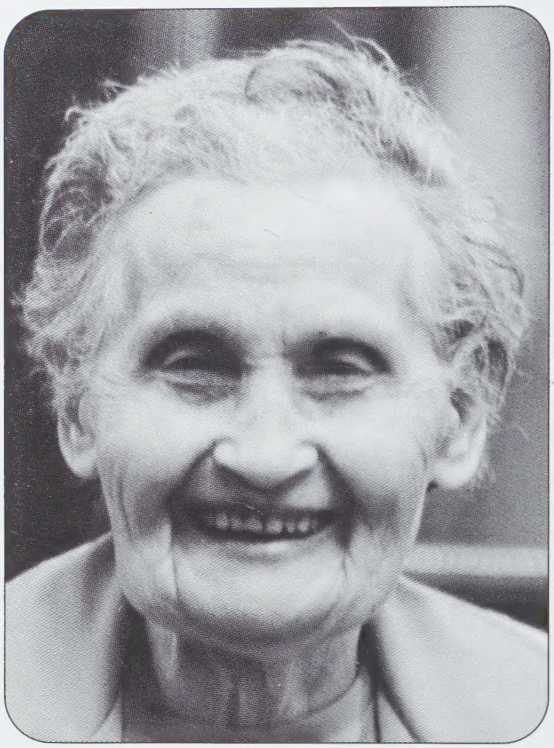
Mama on tape: WAS MAMA A VIRGIN??? or BLOOD ON THE NIGHTGOWN!!!!

by Betty and Phil Suchow

When Mama was in her late nineties, we visited her one week a year. She lived in Far Rockaway, New York. We lived in Redwood City, California. We would sit with her and a tape recorder and we'd ask her a question. She'd go on for hours.

*Mama said she couldn't write (she'd hardly gone to school), and so we bought her a tape recorder of her own. A few times, she actually mailed us tapes of herself talking. On one side, she'd address herself to Phil, screaming and cursing at the top of her lungs because Phil's children had married non-Jews. On the other side Mama's tone would totally change. "Betty, " she'd purr, "*tochterel, ketzeleh...*How are you,* faygeleh*?" (Betty is only the children's step-mother.) In return for Mama's tapes, we'd send her tapes of us talking.*

One day Betty said to Mama, "Tell us about your marriage." What follows is Mama's unexpurgated answer [bracketed words are Phil's annotations]:



Rebecca Rachel Barrish Suchow

After, I went to the doctor and I was alright, and everything was good.

My sister-in-law [Eta], may she rest in pieces, you know the first time, when you're living with a fellow, you should be a virgin. The first time, the blood was down [flowing], so the man knows you're a virgin. The first time with a man there must be blood.

She [Eta] wants to see my blood. See, I don't want to show nobody. I wrapped my nightgown in a paper. So, she came to my brother. "What's a matter with Rivkala [Mama's Yiddish name], she's a girl [a virgin] or what? I didn't see no blood." Maybe she thought I was living with another boy.

Tanta Eta, she was living in the Bronx and after the wedding—she had two 5-room apartments—she gave us a room to sleep. She wanted me to move out to Lakewood [because Eta suspected that Mama wasn't a virgin, not having seen the bloody nightgown]. What should I do?

"Rivkala, you not living with Moishe [Mama's husband] [if you're not a virgin]!"

I said,"What do you mean? If I'm living with mine husband! You want I should show everybody my blood?"

Oh, so I said to her, "Eta, come over here, I want to show you something." And I showed her my nightgown.

"Oh," she said, "*Shen, shen* [beautiful]."

I didn't have no home, see. I didn't have no rooms, so I found rooms on the fourth floor—three rooms. The toilet was down the hall. Oh, I had plenty, but very nice rooms, really. I clean the floor, and I make like a palace. And I bought a bed, a dresser, a table, and chairs and it was wonderful.

And my friends all at once come to me I should show them, and I keep that nightgown, and said,"This is the one." "Oh, Rivkala, oy oy, oh."

It was good. Those rooms was very nice, was very nice. Eighteen dollars a week. Alright, I didn't work. Moishe should go to work and I work?! It's a shame already [for me to work if my husband works].

So I said to mine boss that I'm married. He wish me luck and he gave me a short coat and I went home, and I gave him cake and schnappes. It was wonderful.

Phil and Betty Suchow live in Petaluma, California. Phil, a retired psychologist, spends his time writing. Betty, a retired physical therapist, is an artist.